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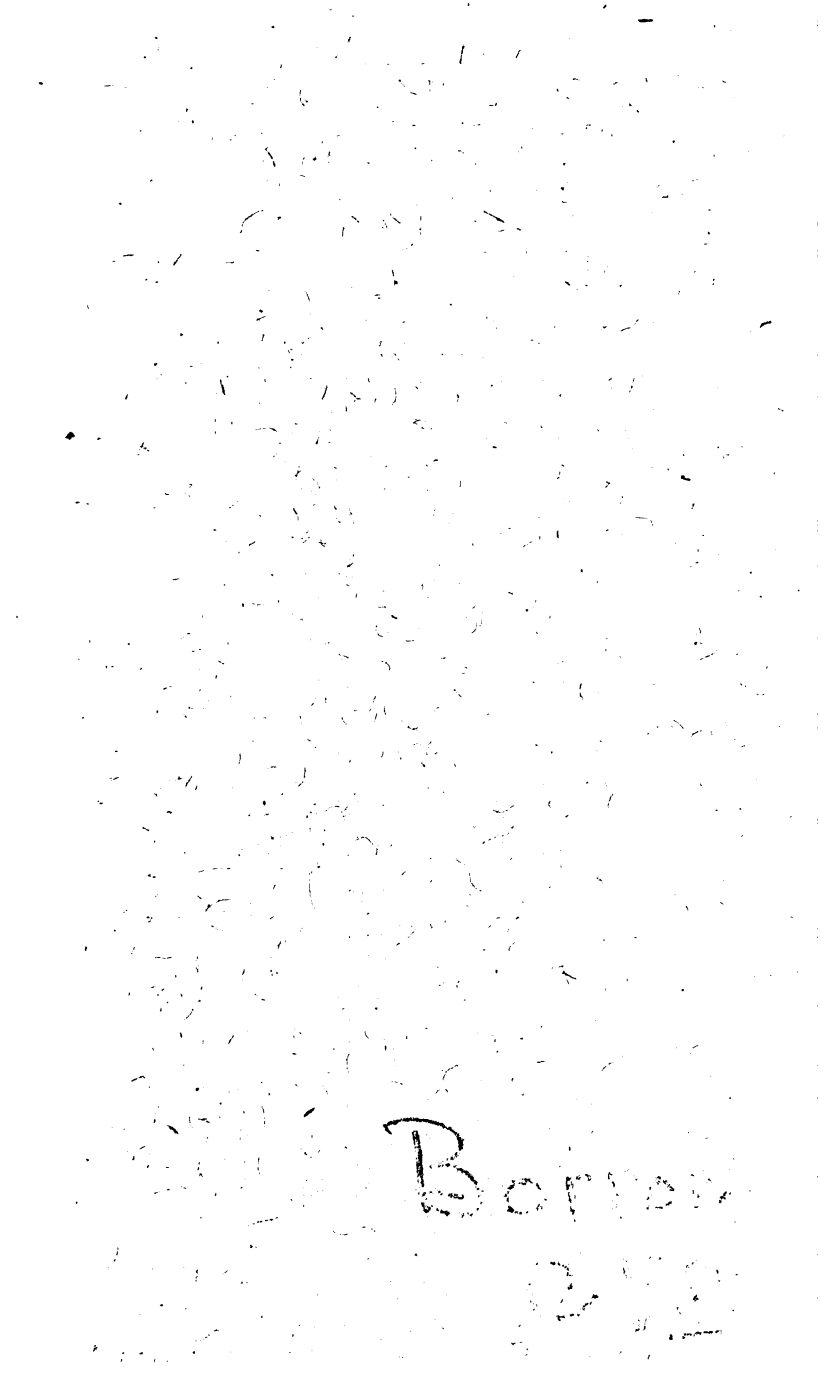

WILD WALES:

ITS PEOPLE, LANGUAGE, AND SCENERY.

BY GEORGE BORROW,

AUTHOR OF "THE BIBLE IN SPAIN," ETC.

"Their Lord they shall praise,
Their language they shall keep,
Their land they shall lose,
Except Wild Wales."

TALIESIN: *Destiny of the Britons.*

IN THREE VOLUMES.—VOL. I.

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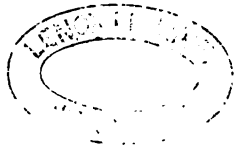

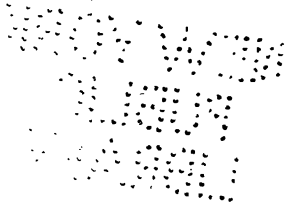

NOTICE.

SOME slight portions of this work appeared in the "Quarterly Review" for January, 1861.

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WILD WALES:

ITS PEOPLE, LANGUAGE, AND SCENERY.

CHAPTER I.

PROPOSED EXCURSION.—KNOWLEDGE OF WELSH.—SINGULAR GROOM.—HARMONIOUS DISTICH.—WELSH PRONUNCIATION.—DAFYDD AB GWILYM.

In the summer of the year 1854 myself, wife, and daughter determined upon going into Wales, to pass a few months there. We are country people of a corner of East Anglia, and, at the time of which I am speaking, had been residing so long on our own little estate, that we had become tired of the objects around us, and conceived that we should be all the better for changing the scene for a short period. We were undetermined for some time with respect to where we should go. I proposed Wales from

the first, but my wife and daughter, who have always had rather a hankering after what is fashionable, said they thought it would be more advisable to go to Harrowgate, or Leamington. On my observing that those were terrible places for expense, they replied that, though the price of corn had of late been shamefully low, we had a spare hundred pounds or two in our pockets, and could afford to pay for a little insight into fashionable life. I told them that there was nothing I so much hated as fashionable life, but that, as I was anything but a selfish person, I would endeavour to stifle my abhorrence of it for a time, and attend them either to Leamington or Harrowgate. By this speech I obtained my wish, even as I knew I should, for my wife and daughter instantly observed, that, after all, they thought we had better go into Wales, which, though not so fashionable as either Leamington or Harrowgate, was a very nice picturesque country, where, they had no doubt, they should get on very well, more especially as I was acquainted with the Welsh language.

It was my knowledge of Welsh, such as it

was, that made me desirous that we should go to Wales, where there was a chance that I might turn it to some little account. In my boyhood I had been something of a philologist; had picked up some Latin and Greek at school; some Irish in Ireland, where I had been with my father, who was in the army; and subsequently whilst an articled clerk to the first solicitor in East Anglia —indeed I may say the prince of all English solicitors—for he was a gentleman, had learnt some Welsh, partly from books and partly from a Welsh groom, whose acquaintance I made. A queer groom he was, and well deserving of having his portrait drawn. He might be about forty-seven years of age, and about five feet eight inches in height; his body was spare and wiry; his chest rather broad, and his arms remarkably long; his legs were of the kind generally known as spindle-shanks, but vigorous withal, for they carried his body with great agility; neck he had none, at least that I ever observed; and his head was anything but high, not measuring, I should think, more than four inches from the bottom of the chin to the

top of the forehead; his cheek-bones were high, his eyes grey and deeply sunken in his face, with an expression in them, partly sullen, and partly irascible; his complexion was indescribable; the little hair which he had, which was almost entirely on the sides and the back part of his head, was of an iron-grey hue. He wore a leather hat on ordinary days, low at the crown, and with the side eaves turned up. A dirty pepper and salt coat, a waistcoat which had once been red, but which had lost its pristine colour, and looked brown; dirty yellow leather breeches, grey worsted stockings, and high-lows. Surely I was right when I said he was a very different groom to those of the present day, whether Welsh or English? What say you, Sir Watkin? What say you, my Lord of Exeter? He looked after the horses, and occasionally assisted in the house of a person who lived at the end of an alley, in which the office of the gentleman to whom I was articled was situated, and having to pass by the door of the office half-a-dozen times in the day, he did not fail to attract the notice of the clerks, who, sometimes individually,

sometimes by twos, sometimes by threes, or even more, not unfrequently stood at the door, bare-headed—mis-spending the time which was not legally their own. Sundry observations, none of them very flattering, did the clerks and, amongst them, myself, make upon the groom, as he passed and repassed, some of them direct, others somewhat oblique. To these he made no reply save by looks, which had in them something dangerous and menacing, and clenching without raising his fists, which looked singularly hard and horny. At length a whisper ran about the alley that the groom was a Welshman; this whisper much increased the malice of my brother clerks against him, who were now whenever he passed the door, and they happened to be there by twos or threes, in the habit of saying something, as if by accident, against Wales and Welshmen, and, individually or together, were in the habit of shouting out "Taffy," when he was at some distance from them, and his back was turned, or regaling his ears with the harmonious and well-known distich of "Taffy was a Welshman, Taffy was a thief: Taffy came to my house and stole a

piece of beef." It had, however, a very different effect upon me. I was trying to learn Welsh, and the idea occurring to me that the groom might be able to assist me in my pursuit, I instantly lost all desire to torment him, and determined to do my best to scrape acquaintance with him, and persuade him to give me what assistance he could in Welsh. I succeeded; how I will not trouble the reader with describing: he and I became great friends, and he taught me what Welsh he could. In return for his instructions I persuaded my brother clerks to leave off holloing after him, and to do nothing further to hurt his feelings, which had been very deeply wounded, so much so, that after the first two or three lessons he told me in confidence that on the morning of the very day I first began to conciliate him he had come to the resolution of doing one of two things, namely, either to hang himself from the balk of the hay-loft, or to give his master warning, both of which things he told me he should have been very unwilling to do, more particularly as he had a wife and family. He gave me lessons on

Sunday afternoons, at my father's house, where he made his appearance very respectably dressed, in a beaver hat, blue surtout, whitish waistcoat, black trowsers and Wellingtons, all with a somewhat ancient look—the Wellingtons I remember were slightly pieced at the sides—but all upon the whole very respectable. I wished at first to persuade him to give me lessons in the office, but could not succeed: "No, no, lad;" said he, "catch me going in there: I would just as soon venture into a nest of parcupines." To translate from books I had already, to a certain degree, taught myself, and at his first visit I discovered, and he himself acknowledged, that at book Welsh I was stronger than himself, but I learnt Welsh pronunciation from him, and to discourse a little in the Welsh tongue. "Had you much difficulty in acquiring the sound of the ll?" I think I hear the reader inquire. None whatever: the double l of the Welsh is by no means the terrible guttural which English people generally suppose it to be, being in reality a pretty liquid, exactly resembling in sound the Spanish ll, the sound of which I had mastered before commencing Welsh,

and which is equivalent to the English lh; so being able to pronounce llano I had of course no difficulty in pronouncing Lluyd, which by the bye was the name of the groom.

I remember that I found the pronunciation of the Welsh far less difficult than I had found the grammar, the most remarkable feature of which is the mutation, under certain circumstances, of particular consonants, when forming the initials of words. This feature I had observed in the Irish, which I had then only learnt by ear.

But to return to the groom. He was really a remarkable character, and taught me two or three things besides Welsh pronunciation; and to discourse a little in Cumraeg. He had been a soldier in his youth, and had served under Moore and Wellington in the Peninsular campaigns, and from him I learnt the details of many a bloody field and bloodier storm, of the sufferings of poor British soldiers, and the tyranny of haughty British officers; more especially of the two commanders just mentioned, the first of whom he swore was shot by his own soldiers, and the second more frequently shot at

by British than French. But it is not deemed a matter of good taste to write about such low people as grooms, I shall therefore dismiss him with no observation further than that after he had visited me on Sunday afternoons for about a year he departed for his own country with his wife, who was an Englishwoman, and his children, in consequence of having been left a small freehold there by a distant relation, and that I neither saw nor heard of him again.

But though I had lost my oral instructor I had still my silent ones, namely, the Welsh books, and of these I made such use that before the expiration of my clerkship I was able to read not only Welsh prose, but, what was infinitely more difficult, Welsh poetry in any of the four-and-twenty measures, and was well versed in the compositions of various of the old Welsh bards, especially those of Dafydd ab Gwilym, whom, since the time when I first became acquainted with his works, I have always considered as the greatest poetical genius that has appeared in Europe since the revival of literature.

After this exordium I think I may proceed to narrate the journey of myself and family into Wales. As perhaps, however, it will be thought that, though I have said quite enough about myself and a certain groom, I have not said quite enough about my wife and daughter, I will add a little more about them. Of my wife I will merely say that she is a perfect paragon of wives—can make puddings and sweets and treacle posset, and is the best woman of business in Eastern Anglia—of my step-daughter—for such she is, though I generally call her daughter, and with good reason, seeing that she has always shown herself a daughter to me—that she has all kinds of good qualities, and several accomplishments, knowing something of conchology, more of botany, drawing capitally in the Dutch style, and playing remarkably well on the guitar—not the trumpery German thing so-called—but the real Spanish guitar.

CHAPTER II.

THE STARTING.—PETERBOROUGH CATHEDRAL.—ANGLO-SAXON NAMES.—KEMPE VISER.—STEAM.—NORMAN BARONS.—CHESTER ALE.—SION TUDOR.—PRETTY WELSH TONGUE.

So our little family, consisting of myself, my wife Mary, and my daughter Henrietta, for daughter I shall persist in calling her, started for Wales in the afternoon of the 27th July, 1854. We flew through part of Norfolk and Cambridgeshire in a train which we left at Ely, and getting into another, which did not fly quite so fast as the one we had quitted, reached the Peterborough station at about six o'clock of a delightful evening. We proceeded no farther on our journey that day, in order that we might have an opportunity of seeing the cathedral.

Sallying arm in arm from the Station Hotel, where we had determined to take up our quarters for the night, we crossed a bridge over the

deep quiet Nen, on the southern bank of which stands the station, and soon arrived at the cathedral—unfortunately we were too late to procure admission into the interior, and had to content ourselves with walking round it and surveying its outside.

It is named after, and occupies the site, or part of the site of an immense monastery, founded by the Mercian King Peda in the year 665, and destroyed by fire in the year 1116, which monastery, though originally termed Medeshamsted, or the homestead on the meads, was subsequently termed Peterborough, from the circumstance of its having been reared by the old Saxon monarch for the love of God and the honour of Saint Peter, as the Saxon Chronicle says, a book which I went through carefully in my younger days, when I studied Saxon, for, as I have already told the reader, I was in those days a bit of a philologist. Like the first the second edifice was originally a monastery, and continued so till the time of the Reformation; both were abodes of learning; for if the Saxon Chronicle was commenced in the monkish cells of the first,

it was completed in those of the second. What is at present called Peterborough Cathedral is a noble venerable pile, equal upon the whole in external appearance to the cathedrals of Toledo, Burgos and Leon, all of which I have seen. Nothing in architecture can be conceived more beautiful than the principal entrance, which fronts the west, and which, at the time we saw it, was gilded with the rays of the setting sun.

After having strolled about the edifice surveying it until we were weary, we returned to our inn, and after taking an excellent supper retired to rest.

At ten o'clock next morning we left the capital of the meads. With dragon speed, and dragon noise, fire, smoke, and fury, the train dashed along its road through beautiful meadows, garnished here and there with pollard sallows; over pretty streams, whose waters stole along imperceptibly; by venerable old churches, which I vowed I would take the first opportunity of visiting: stopping now and then to recruit its energies at places, whose old Anglo-Saxon

names stared me in the eyes from station boards, as specimens of which, let me only dot down Willy Thorpe, Ringsted, and Yrthling Boro. Quite forgetting everything Welsh, I was enthusiastically Saxon the whole way from Medeshamsted to Blissworth, so thoroughly Saxon was the country, with its rich meads, its old churches and its names. After leaving Blissworth, a thoroughly Saxon place by the bye, as its name shows, signifying the stronghold or possession of Bligh or Blee, I became less Saxon; the country was rather less Saxon, and I caught occasionally the word "by" on a board, the Danish for a town; which "by" waked in me a considerable portion of Danish enthusiasm, of which I have plenty, and with reason, having translated the glorious Kæmpe Viser over the desk of my ancient master, the gentleman solicitor of East Anglia. At length we drew near the great workshop of England, called by some, Brummagem or Bromwicham, by others Birmingham, and I fell into a philological revery, wondering which was the right name. Before, however, we came to the station, I decided

that both names were right enough, but that Bromwicham was the original name; signifying the home on the broomie moor, which name it lost in polite parlance for Birmingham, or the home of the son of Biarmer, when a certain man of Danish blood, called Biarming, or the son of Biarmer, got possession of it, whether by force, fraud, or marriage—the latter, by the bye, is by far the best way of getting possession of an estate —this deponent neither knoweth nor careth. At Birmingham station I became a modern Englishman, enthusiastically proud of modern England's science and energy; that station alone is enough to make one proud of being a modern Englishman. Oh, what an idea does that station, with its thousand trains dashing off in all directions, or arriving from all quarters, give of modern English science and energy. My modern English pride accompanied me all the way to Tipton; for all along the route there were wonderful evidences of English skill and enterprise; in chimneys high as cathedral spires, vomiting forth smoke, furnaces emitting flame and lava, and in the sound of gigantic hammers, wielded

by steam, the Englishman's slave. After passing Tipton, at which place one leaves the great working district behind; I became for a considerable time a yawning, listless Englishman, without pride, enthusiasm or feeling of any kind, from which state I was suddenly roused by the sight of ruined edifices on the tops of hills. They were remains of castles built by Norman Barons. Here, perhaps, the reader will expect from me a burst of Norman enthusiasm: if so he will be mistaken; I have no Norman enthusiasm, and hate and abominate the name of Norman, for I have always associated that name with the deflowering of helpless Englishwomen, the plundering of English homesteads, and the tearing out of poor Englishmen's eyes. The sight of those edifices, now in ruins, but which were once the strongholds of plunder, violence, and lust, made me almost ashamed of being an Englishman, for they brought to my mind the indignities to which poor English blood has been subjected. I sat silent and melancholy, till looking from the window I caught sight of a long line of hills, which I guessed to be the

Welsh hills, as indeed they proved, which sight causing me to remember that I was bound for Wales, the land of the bard, made me cast all gloomy thoughts aside and glow with all the Welsh enthusiasm with which I glowed when I first started in the direction of Wales.

On arriving at Chester, at which place we intended to spend two or three days, we put up at an old-fashioned inn in Northgate Street, to which we had been recommended; my wife and daughter ordered tea and its accompaniments, and I ordered ale, and that which always should accompany it, cheese. "The ale I shall find bad," said I; Chester ale had a villainous character in the time of old Sion Tudor, who made a first-rate englyn upon it, and it has scarcely improved since; "but I shall have a treat in the cheese, Cheshire cheese has always been reckoned excellent, and now that I am in the capital of the cheese country, of course I shall have some of the very prime." Well, the tea, loaf and butter made their appearance, and with them my cheese and ale. To my horror the cheese had

much the appearance of soap of the commonest kind, which indeed I found it much resembled in taste, on putting a small portion into my mouth. "Ah," said I, after I had opened the window and ejected the half-masticated morsel into the street; "those who wish to regale on good Cheshire cheese must not come to Chester, no more than those who wish to drink first-rate coffee must go to Mocha. I'll now see whether the ale is drinkable;" so I took a little of the ale into my mouth, and instantly going to the window, spirted it out after the cheese. "Of a surety," said I, "Chester ale must be of much the same quality as it was in the time of Sion Tudor, who spoke of it to the following effect:—

"'Chester ale, Chester ale! I could ne'er get it down,
'Tis made of ground-ivy, of dirt, and of bran,
'Tis as thick as a river below a huge town!
'Tis not lap for a dog, far less drink for a man.'

Well! if I have been deceived in the cheese, I have at any rate not been deceived in the ale, which I expected to find execrable. Patience! I shall not fall into a passion, more especially as there are things I can fall back upon. Wife! I will trouble you for a cup of tea. Henrietta!

have the kindness to cut me a slice of bread and butter."

Upon the whole, we found ourselves very comfortable in the old-fashioned inn, which was kept by a nice old-fashioned gentlewoman, with the assistance of three servants, namely, a "boots" and two strapping chambermaids, one of which was a Welsh girl, with whom I soon scraped acquaintance, not, I assure the reader, for the sake of the pretty Welsh eyes which she carried in her head, but for the sake of the pretty Welsh tongue which she carried in her mouth, from which I confess occasionally proceeded sounds which, however pretty, I was quite unable to understand.

CHAPTER III.

CHESTER.—THE ROWS.—LEWIS GLYN COTHI.—TRAGEDY OF MOLD.—NATIVE OF ANTIGUA.—SLAVERY AND THE AMERICANS.—THE TENTS.—SATURDAY NIGHT.

ON the morning after our arrival we went out together, and walked up and down several streets; my wife and daughter, however, soon leaving me to go into a shop, I strolled about by myself. Chester is an ancient town with walls and gates, a prison called a castle, built on the site of an ancient keep, an unpretending-looking red sandstone cathedral, two or three handsome churches, several good streets, and certain curious places called rows. The Chester row is a broad arched stone gallery running parallel with the street within the façades of the houses; it is partly open on the side of the street, and just one story above it. Within the rows, of which there are three or four, are shops, every shop being on that

side which is farthest from the street. All the best shops in Chester are to be found in the rows. These rows, to which you ascend by stairs up narrow passages, were originally built for the security of the wares of the principal merchants against the Welsh. Should the mountaineers break into the town, as they frequently did, they might rifle some of the common shops, where their booty would be slight, but those which contained the more costly articles would be beyond their reach; for at the first alarm the doors of the passages, up which the stairs led, would be closed, and all access to the upper streets cut off, from the open arches of which missiles of all kinds, kept ready for such occasions, could be discharged upon the intruders, who would be soon glad to beat a retreat. These rows and the walls are certainly the most remarkable memorials of old times which Chester has to boast of.

Upon the walls it is possible to make the whole compass of the city, there being a good but narrow walk upon them. The northern wall abuts upon a frightful ravine, at the bottom

of which is a canal. From the western one there is a noble view of the Welsh hills.

As I stood gazing upon the hills from the wall a ragged man came up and asked for charity.

"Can you tell me the name of that tall hill?" said I, pointing in the direction of the south-west. "That hill, sir," said the beggar, "is called Moel Vamagh; I ought to know something about it as I was born at its foot." "Moel," said I, "a bald hill; Vamagh, maternal or motherly. Moel Vamagh, the Mother Moel." "Just so, sir," said the beggar; "I see you are a Welshman, like myself, though I suppose you come from the South—Moel Vamagh is the mother Moel, and is called so because it is the highest of all the Moels." "Did you ever hear of a place called Mold?" said I. "Oh, yes, your honour," said the beggar; "many a time; and many's the time I have been there." "In which direction does it lie?" said I. "Towards Moel Vamagh, your honour," said the beggar, "which is a few miles beyond it; you can't see it from here, but look towards Moel

Vamagh and you will see over it." "Thank you," said I, and gave something to the beggar, who departed, after first taking off his hat. Long and fixedly did I gaze in the direction of Mold. The reason which induced me to do so was the knowledge of an appalling tragedy transacted there in the old time, in which there is every reason to suppose a certain Welsh bard, called Lewis Glyn Cothi, had a share.

This man, who was a native of South Wales, flourished during the wars of the Roses. Besides being a poetical he was something of a military genius, and had a command of foot in the army of the Lancastrian Jasper Earl of Pembroke, the son of Owen Tudor, and half-brother of Henry the Sixth. After the battle of Mortimer's Cross, in which the Earl's forces were defeated, the warrior bard found his way to Chester, where he married the widow of a citizen and opened a shop, without asking the permission of the mayor, who with the officers of justice came and seized all his goods, which, according to his own account, filled nine sacks,

and then drove him out of the town. The bard in a great fury indited an awdl, in which he invites Reinallt ap Grufydd ap Bleddyn, a kind of predatory chieftain, who resided a little way off in Flintshire, to come and set the town on fire, and slaughter the inhabitants, in revenge for the wrongs he had suffered, and then proceeds to vent all kinds of imprecations against the mayor and people of Chester, wishing, amongst other things, that they might soon hear that the Dee had become too shallow to bear their ships—that a certain cutaneous disorder might attack the wrists of great and small, old and young, laity and clergy—that grass might grow in their streets—that Ilar and Cyveilach, Welsh saints, might slay them—that dogs might snarl at them—and that the king of heaven, with the saints Brynach and Non, might afflict them with blindness—which piece, however ineffectual in inducing God and the saints to visit the Chester people with the curses with which the furious bard wished them to be afflicted, seems to have produced somewhat

of its intended effect on the chieftain, who shortly afterwards, on learning that the mayor and many of the Chester people were present at the fair of Mold, near which place he resided, set upon them at the head of his forces, and after a desperate combat, in which many lives were lost, took the mayor prisoner, and drove those of his people who survived into a tower, which he set on fire and burnt, with all the unhappy wretches which it contained, completing the horrors of the day by hanging the unfortunate mayor.

Conversant as I was with all this strange history, is it wonderful that I looked with great interest from the wall of Chester in the direction of Mold?

Once did I make the compass of the city upon the walls, and was beginning to do the same a second time, when I stumbled against a black, who, with his arms leaning upon the wall, was spitting over it, in the direction of the river. I apologized, and contrived to enter into conversation with him. He was tolerably well dressed, had a hairy cap on his head, was about forty years of age, and brutishly ugly, his

features scarcely resembling those of a human being. He told me he was a native of Antigua, a blacksmith by trade, and had been a slave. I asked him if he could speak any language besides English, and received for answer that besides English, he could speak Spanish and French. Forthwith I spoke to him in Spanish, but he did not understand me. I then asked him to speak to me in Spanish, but he could not. "Surely you can tell me the word for water in Spanish," said I; he, however, was not able. "How is it," said I, "that, pretending to be acquainted with Spanish, you do not even know the word for water?" He said he could not tell, but supposed that he had forgotten the Spanish language, adding however, that he could speak French perfectly. I spoke to him in French—he did not understand me: I told him to speak to me in French, but he did not. I then asked him the word for bread in French, but he could not tell me. I made no observations on his ignorance, but inquired how he liked being a slave? He said not at all; that it was very bad to be a slave, as a slave was forced to work.

I asked him if he did not work now that he was free? He said very seldom; that he did not like work, and that it did not agree with him. I asked how he came into England, and he said that wishing to see England, he had come over with a gentleman as his servant, but that as soon as he got there, he had left his master, as he did not like work. I asked him how he contrived to live in England without working? He said that any black might live in England without working; that all he had to do was to attend religious meetings, and speak against slavery and the Americans. I asked him if he had done so. He said he had, and that the religious people were very kind to him, and gave him money, and that a religious lady was going to marry him. I asked him if he knew anything about the Americans? He said he did, and that they were very bad people, who kept slaves and flogged them. "And quite right too," said I, "if they are lazy rascals like yourself, who want to eat without working. What a pretty set of knaves or fools must they be, who encourage a fellow like you to speak

against negro slavery, of the necessity for which you yourself are a living instance, and against a people of whom you know as much as of French or Spanish." Then leaving the black, who made no other answer to what I said, than by spitting with considerable force in the direction of the river, I continued making my second compass of the city upon the wall.

Having walked round the city for the second time, I returned to the inn. In the evening I went out again, passed over the bridge, and then turned to the right in the direction of the hills. Near the river, on my right, on a kind of green, I observed two or three tents resembling those of gypsies. Some ragged children were playing near them, who, however, had nothing of the appearance of the children of the Egyptian race, their locks being not dark, but either of a flaxen or red hue, and their features not delicate and regular, but coarse and uncouth, and their complexions not olive, but rather inclining to be fair. I did not go up to them, but continued my course till I arrived near a large factory. I then turned and retraced my steps

into the town. It was Saturday night, and the streets were crowded with people, many of whom must have been Welsh, as I heard the Cambrian language spoken on every side.

CHAPTER IV.

SUNDAY MORNING.—TARES AND WHEAT.—TEETOTALISM.—HEARSAY.—IRISH FAMILY.—WHAT PROFESSION?—SABBATH EVENING.—PRIEST OR MINISTER.—GIVE US GOD.

ON the Sunday morning, as we sat at breakfast, we heard the noise of singing in the street; running to the window, we saw a number of people, bareheaded, from whose mouths the singing or psalmody proceeded. These, on inquiry, we were informed, were Methodists, going about to raise recruits for a grand camp-meeting, which was to be held a little way out of the town. We finished our breakfast, and at eleven attended divine service at the Cathedral. The interior of this holy edifice was smooth and neat, strangely contrasting with its exterior, which was rough and weather-beaten. We had decent places found us by a civil verger, who probably took us for what we were—decent

country people. We heard much fine chanting by the choir, and an admirable sermon, preached by a venerable Prebend, on "Tares and Wheat." The congregation was numerous and attentive. After service, we returned to our inn, and at two o'clock dined. During dinner, our conversation ran almost entirely on the sermon, which we all agreed was one of the best sermons we had ever heard, and most singularly adapted to country people like ourselves, being on "Wheat and Tares." When dinner was over, my wife and daughter repaired to a neighbouring church, and I went in quest of the camp-meeting, having a mighty desire to know what kind of a thing Methodism at Chester was.

I found about two thousand people gathered together in a field near the railroad station; a waggon stood under some green elms at one end of the field, in which were ten or a dozen men with the look of Methodist preachers; one of these was holding forth to the multitude when I arrived, but he presently sat down, I having, as I suppose, only come in time to hear the fag-

end of his sermon. Another succeeded him, who, after speaking for about half an hour, was succeeded by another. All the discourses were vulgar and fanatical, and in some instances unintelligible, at least to my ears. There was plenty of vociferation, but not one single burst of eloquence. Some of the assembly appeared to take considerable interest in what was said, and every now and then showed they did by devout hums and groans; but the generality evidently took little or none, staring about listlessly, or talking to one another. Sometimes, when anything particularly low escaped from the mouth of the speaker, I heard exclamations of "how low! well, I think I could preach better than that," and the like. At length a man of about fifty, pock-broken and somewhat bald, began to speak: unlike the others who screamed, shouted, and seemed in earnest, he spoke in a dry, waggish style, which had all the coarseness and nothing of the cleverness of that of old Rowland Hill, whom I once heard. After a great many jokes, some of them very poor, and others exceedingly thread-bare, on the folly

of those who sell themselves to the Devil for a little temporary enjoyment, he introduced the subject of drunkenness, or rather drinking fermented liquors, which he seemed to consider the same thing; and many a sorry joke on the folly of drinking them did he crack, which some half-dozen amidst the concourse applauded. At length he said:—

"After all, brethren, such drinking is no joking matter, for it is the root of all evil. Now, brethren, if you would all get to heaven, and cheat the enemy of your souls, never go into a public-house to drink, and never fetch any drink from a public-house. Let nothing pass your lips, in the shape of drink, stronger than water or tea. Brethren, if you would cheat the Devil, take the pledge and become teetotallers. I am a teetotaller myself, thank God—though once I was a regular lushington."

Here ensued a burst of laughter in which I joined, though not at the wretched joke, but at the absurdity of the argument; for, according to that argument, I thought my old friends the

Spaniards and Portuguese must be the most moral people in the world, being almost all water-drinkers. As the speaker was proceeding with his nonsense, I heard some one say behind me—"a pretty fellow, that, to speak against drinking and public-houses: he pretends to be reformed, but he is still as fond of the lush as ever. It was only the other day I saw him reeling out of a gin-shop."

Now that speech I did not like, for I saw at once that it could not be true, so I turned quickly round and said—

"Old chap, I can scarcely credit that!"

The man, whom I addressed, a rough-and-ready-looking fellow of the lower class, seemed half disposed to return me a savage answer; but an Englishman of the lower class, though you call his word in question, is never savage with you provided you call him old chap, and he considers you by your dress to be his superior in station. Now I, who had called the word of this man in question, had called him old chap, and was considerably better dressed than himself; so, after a little hesitation, he

became quite gentle, and something more, for he said in a half-apologetic tone—"Well, sir, I did not exactly see him myself, but a particular friend of mine heer'd a man say, that he heer'd another man say, that he was told that a man heer'd that that fellow——"

"Come, come!" said I, "a man must not be convicted on evidence like that; no man has more contempt for the doctrine which that man endeavours to inculcate than myself, for I consider it to have been got up partly for fanatical, partly for political purposes; but I will never believe that he was lately seen coming out of a gin-shop; he is too wise, or rather too cunning, for that."

I stayed listening to these people till evening was at hand. I then left them, and without returning to the inn strolled over the bridge to the green, where the tents stood. I went up to them: two women sat at the entrance of one; a man stood by them, and the children, whom I had before seen, were gambolling near at hand. One of the women was about forty, the other some twenty years younger; both were ugly.

The younger was a rude, stupid-looking creature, with red cheeks and redder hair, but there was a dash of intelligence and likewise of wildness in the countenance of the elder female, whose complexion and hair were rather dark. The man was about the same age as the elder woman; he had rather a sharp look, and was dressed in hat, white frock-coat, corduroy breeches, long stockings and shoes. I gave them the seal of the evening.

"Good evening to your haner," said the man—"Good evening to you, sir," said the woman; whilst the younger mumbled something, probably to the same effect, but which I did not catch.

"Fine weather," said I.

"Very, sir," said the elder female. "Won't you please to sit down?" and reaching back into the tent, she pulled out a stool which she placed near me.

I sat down on the stool. "You are not from these parts?" said I, addressing myself to the man.

"We are not, your haner," said the man; "we are from Ireland."

"And this lady," said I, motioning with my head to the elder female, "is, I suppose, your wife."

"She is, your haner, and the children which your haner sees are my children."

"And who is this young lady?" said I, motioning to the uncouth-looking girl.

"The young lady, as your haner is pleased to call her, is a daughter of a sister of mine who is now dead, along with her husband. We have her with us, your haner, because if we did not she would be alone in the world."

"And what trade or profession do you follow?" said I.

"We do a bit in the tinkering line, your haner."

"Do you find tinkering a very profitable profession?" said I.

"Not very, your haner; but we contrive to get a crust and a drink by it."

"That's more than I ever could," said I.

"Has your haner then ever followed tinkering?" said the man.

"Yes," said I, "but I soon left off."

"And became a minister," said the elder female. "Well, your honour is not the first indifferent tinker, that's turn'd out a shining minister."

"Why do you think me a minister?"

"Because your honour has the very look and voice of one. Oh, it was kind in your honour to come to us here in the Sabbath evening, in order that you might bring us God."

"What do you mean by bringing you God?" said I.

"Talking to us about good things, sir, and instructing us out of the Holy Book."

"I am no minister," said I.

"Then you are a priest; I am sure you are either a minister or a priest; and now that I look on you, sir, I think you look more like a priest than a minister. Yes, I see you are a priest. Oh, your Reverence, give us God! pull out the crucifix from your bosom, and let us kiss the face of God!

"Of what religion are you?" said I.

"Catholics, your Reverence, Catholics are we all."

"I am no priest."

"Then you are a minister; I am sure you are either a priest or a minister. O sir, pull out the Holy Book, and instruct us from it this blessed Sabbath evening. Give us God, sir, give us God!"

"And would you, who are Catholics, listen to the voice of a minister?"

"That would we, sir; at least I would. If you are a minister, and a good minister, I would as soon listen to your words as those of Father Toban himself."

"And who is Father Toban?"

"A powerful priest in these parts, sir, who has more than once eased me of my sins, and given me God upon the cross. Oh, a powerful and comfortable priest is Father Toban."

"And what would he say if he were to know that you asked for God from a minister?"

"I do not know, and do not much care; if I get God, I do not care whether I get Him from a minister or a priest; both have Him, no doubt,

only give Him in different ways. O sir, do give us God; we need Him, sir, for we are sinful people; we call ourselves tinkers, but many is the sinful thing"—

"Bi-do-hosd;" said the man: Irish words tantamount to "Be silent!"

"I will not be hushed," said the woman, speaking English. "The man is a good man, and he will do us no harm. We are tinkers, sir; but we do many things besides tinkering, many sinful things, especially in Wales, whither we are soon going again. Oh, I want to be eased of some of my sins before I go into Wales again, and so do you Tourlough, for you know how you are sometimes haunted by Devils at night in those dreary Welsh hills. O sir, give us comfort in some shape or other, either as priest or minister; give us God! Give us God!"

"I am neither priest nor minister," said I, "and can only say: Lord have mercy upon you!" Then getting up I flung the children some money and departed.

"We do not want your money, sir," screamed the woman after me; "we have plenty of money. Give us God! Give us God!"

"Yes, your haner," said the man, "Give us God! we do not want money;" and the uncouth girl said something, which sounded much like Give us God! but I hastened across the meadow, which was now quite dusky, and was presently in the inn with my wife and daughter.

CHAPTER V.

WELSH BOOK-STALL.—WIT AND POETRY.—WELSH OF CHESTER.—BEAUTIFUL MORNING.—NOBLE FELLOW.—THE COILING SERPENT.—WREXHAM CHURCH.—WELSH OR ENGLISH?—CODIAD YR EHEDYDD.

ON the afternoon of Monday I sent my family off by the train to Llangollen, which place we had determined to make our head-quarters during our stay in Wales. I intended to follow them next day, not in train, but on foot, as by walking I should be better able to see the country, between Chester and Llangollen, than by making the journey by the flying vehicle. As I returned to the inn from the train I took refuge from a shower in one of the rows or covered streets, to which, as I have already said, one ascends by flights of steps; stopping at a book-stall I took up a book which chanced to be a Welsh one—the proprietor, a short red-faced man, observing me

reading the book, asked me if I could understand it. I told him that I could.

"If so," said he, "let me hear you translate the two lines on the title-page."

"Are you a Welshman?" said I.

"I am!" he replied.

"Good!" said I, and I translated into English the two lines which were a couplet by Edmund Price, an old archdeacon of Merion, celebrated in his day for wit and poetry.

The man then asked me from what part of Wales I came, and when I told him that I was an Englishman was evidently offended, either because he did not believe me, or, as I more incline to think, did not approve of an Englishman's understanding Welsh.

The book was the life of the Rev. Richards, and was published at Caer-lleon, or the city of the legion, the appropriate ancient British name for the place now called Chester, a legion having been kept stationed there during the occupation of Britain by the Romans.

I returned to the inn and dined, and then yearning for society, descended into the kitchen

and had some conversation with the Welsh maid. She told me that there were a great many Welsh in Chester from all parts of Wales, but chiefly from Denbighshire and Flintshire, which latter was her own county. That a great many children were born in Chester of Welsh parents, and brought up in the fear of God and love of the Welsh tongue. That there were some who had never been in Wales, who spoke as good Welsh as herself, or better. That the Welsh of Chester were of various religious persuasions; that some were Baptists, some Independents, but that the greater part were Calvinistic-Methodists; that she herself was a Calvinistic-Methodist; that the different persuasions had their different chapels, in which God was prayed to in Welsh; that there were very few Welsh in Chester who belonged to the Church of England, and that the Welsh in general do not like Church of England worship, as I should soon find if I went into Wales.

Late in the evening I directed my steps across the bridge to the green, where I had discoursed with the Irish itinerants. I wished

to have some more conversation with them respecting their way of life, and, likewise, as they had so strongly desired it, to give them a little Christian comfort, for my conscience reproached me for my abrupt departure on the preceding evening. On arriving at the green, however, I found them gone, and no traces of them but the mark of their fire and a little dirty straw. I returned, disappointed and vexed, to my inn.

Early the next morning I departed from Chester for Llangollen, distant about twenty miles; I passed over the noble bridge and proceeded along a broad and excellent road, leading in a direction almost due south through pleasant meadows. I felt very happy—and no wonder; the morning was beautiful, the birds sang merrily, and a sweet smell proceeded from the new-cut hay in the fields, and I was bound for Wales. I passed over the river Allan and through two villages called, as I was told, Pulford and Marford, and ascended a hill; from the top of this hill the view is very fine. To the east are the high lands of Cheshire, to the

west the bold hills of Wales, and below, on all sides a fair variety of wood and water, green meads and arable fields.

"You may well look around, Measter," said a waggoner, who, coming from the direction in which I was bound, stopped to breathe his team on the top of the hill; "you may well look around—there isn't such a place to see the country from, far and near, as where we stand. Many come to this place to look about them."

I looked at the man, and thought I had never seen a more powerful-looking fellow; he was about six feet two inches high, immensely broad in the shoulders, and could hardly have weighed less than sixteen stone. I gave him the seal of the morning, and asked whether he was Welsh or English.

"English, Measter, English; born t'other side of Beeston, pure Cheshire, Measter."

"I suppose," said I, "there are few Welshmen such big fellows as yourself."

"No, Measter," said the fellow, with a grin, "there are few Welshmen so big as I, or yourself either, they are small men mostly, Measter,

them Welshers, very small men—and yet the fellows can use their hands. I am a bit of a fighter, Measter, at least I was before my wife made me join the Methodist connection, and I once fit with a Welshman at Wrexham, he came from the hills, and was a real Welshman, and shorter than myself by a whole head and shoulder, but he stood up against me, and gave me more than play for my money, till I gripped him, flung him down and myself upon him, and then of course 'twas all over with him."

"You are a noble fellow," said I, "and a credit to Cheshire. Will you have sixpence to drink?"

"Thank you Measter, I shall stop at Pulford, and shall be glad to drink your health in a jug of ale."

I gave him sixpence, and descended the hill on one side, while he, with his team, descended it on the other.

"A genuine Saxon," said I; "I dare say just like many of those who, under Hengist, subdued the plains of Lloegr and Britain. Taliesin

called the Saxon race the Coiling Serpent. He had better have called it the Big Bull. He was a noble poet, however: what wonderful lines, upon the whole, are those in his prophecy, in which he speaks of the Saxons and Britons, and of the result of their struggle—

"A serpent which coils,
And with fury boils,
From Germany coming with arm'd wings spread,
Shall subdue and shall enthrall
The broad Britain all,
From the Lochlin ocean to Severn's bed.

"And British men
Shall be captives then
To strangers from Saxonia's strand;
They shall praise their God, and hold
Their language as of old,
But except wild Wales they shall lose their land."

I arrived at Wrexham, and having taken a very hearty breakfast at the principal inn, for I felt rather hungry after a morning's walk of ten miles, I walked about the town. The town is reckoned a Welsh town, but its appearance is not Welsh—its inhabitants have neither the look nor language of Welshmen, and its name shows that it was founded by some Saxon adventurer, Wrexham being a Saxon compound,

signifying the home or habitation of Rex or Rag, and identical, or nearly so, with the Wroxham of East Anglia. It is a stirring bustling place, of much traffic, and of several thousand inhabitants. Its most remarkable object is its church, which stands at the south-western side. To this church, after wandering for some time about the streets, I repaired. The tower is quadrangular, and is at least one hundred feet high; it has on its summit four little turrets, one at each corner, between each of which are three spirelets, the middlemost of the three the highest. The nave of the church is to the east; it is of two stories, both crenelated at the top. I wished to see the interior of the church, but found the gate locked. Observing a group of idlers close at hand with their backs against a wall, I went up to them and addressing myself to one, inquired whether I could see the church. "O yes, sir," said the man; "the clerk who has the key lives close at hand; one of us shall go and fetch him; by the bye, I may as well go myself." He moved slowly away. He was a large bulky man of

about the middle age, and his companions were about the same age and size as himself. I asked them if they were Welsh. "Yes, sir," said one, "I suppose we are, for they call us Welsh." I asked if any of them could speak Welsh. "No, sir," said the man, "all the Welsh that any of us know, or indeed wish to know, is Cwrw da." Here there was a general laugh. Cwrw da signifies good ale. I at first thought that the words might be intended as a hint for a treat, but was soon convinced of the contrary. There was no greedy expectation in his eyes, nor, indeed, in those of his companions, though they all looked as if they were fond of good ale. I inquired whether much Welsh was spoken in the town, and was told very little. When the man returned with the clerk I thanked him. He told me I was welcome, and then went and leaned with his back against the wall. He and his mates were probably a set of boon companions enjoying the air after a night's bout at drinking. I was subsequently told that all the people of Wrexham are fond of good ale. The clerk unlocked the church door, and conducted

me in. The interior was modern, but in no respects remarkable. The clerk informed me that there was a Welsh service every Sunday afternoon in the church, but that few people attended and those few were almost entirely from the country. He said that neither he nor the clergyman were natives of Wrexham. He showed me the Welsh Church Bible, and at my request read a few verses from the sacred volume. He seemed a highly-intelligent man. I gave him something, which appeared to be more than he expected, and departed, after inquiring of him the road to Llangollen.

I crossed a bridge, for there is a bridge and a stream too at Wrexham. The road at first bore due west, but speedily took a southerly direction. I moved rapidly over an undulating country; a region of hills or rather of mountains lay on my right hand. At the entrance of a small village a poor sickly-looking woman asked me for charity.

"Are you Welsh or English?" said I.

"Welsh," she replied; "but I speak both languages, as do all the people here."

I gave her a halfpenny; she wished me luck, and I proceeded. I passed some huge black buildings which a man told me were collieries, and several carts laden with coal, and soon came to Rhiwabon—a large village about half way between Wrexham and Llangollen. I observed in this place nothing remarkable, but an ancient church. My way from hence lay nearly west. I ascended a hill, from the top of which I looked down into a smoky valley. I descended, passing by a great many collieries, in which I observed grimy men working amidst smoke and flame. At the bottom of the hill near a bridge I turned round. A ridge to the east particularly struck my attention; it was covered with dusky edifices, from which proceeded thundering sounds, and puffs of smoke. A woman passed me going towards Rhiwabon; I pointed to the ridge and asked its name; I spoke English. The woman shook her head and replied "Dim Saesneg."

"This is as it should be," said I to myself; "I now feel I am in Wales." I repeated the question in Welsh.

"Cefn Bach," she replied—which signifies the little ridge.

"Diolch iti," I replied, and proceeded on my way.

I was now in a wide valley—enormous hills were on my right. The road was good, and above it, in the side of a steep bank, was a causeway intended for foot passengers. It was overhung with hazel bushes. I walked along it to its termination which was at Llangollen. I found my wife and daughter at the principal inn. They had already taken a house. We dined together at the inn; during the dinner we had music, for a Welsh harper stationed in the passage played upon his instrument "Codiad yr ehedydd." "Of a surety," said I, "I am in Wales!"

CHAPTER VI.

LLANGOLLEN.—WYN AB NUDD.—THE DEE.—DINAS BRAN.

THE northern side of the vale of Llangollen is formed by certain enormous rocks called the Eglwysig rocks, which extend from east to west, a distance of about two miles. The southern side is formed by the Berwyn hills. The valley is intersected by the river Dee, the origin of which is a deep lake near Bala, about twenty miles to the west. Between the Dee and the Eglwysig rises a lofty hill, on the top of which are the ruins of Dinas Bran, which bear no slight resemblance to a crown. The upper part of the hill is bare with the exception of what is covered by the ruins; on the lower part there are inclosures and trees, with, here and there, a grove or farm-

house. On the other side of the valley, to the east of Llangollen, is a hill called Pen y Coed, beautifully covered with trees of various kinds; it stands between the river and the Berwyn, even as the hill of Dinas Bran stands between the river and the Eglwysig rocks—it does not, however, confront Dinas Bran, which stands more to the west.

Llangollen is a small town or large village of white houses with slate roofs, it contains about two thousand inhabitants, and is situated principally on the southern side of the Dee. At its western end it has an ancient bridge and a modest unpretending church nearly in its centre, in the chancel of which rest the mortal remains of an old bard called Gryffydd Hiraethog. From some of the houses on the southern side there is a noble view—Dinas Bran and its mighty hill forming the principal objects. The view from the northern part of the town, which is indeed little more than a suburb, is not quite so grand, but is nevertheless highly interesting. The eastern entrance of the vale of Llangollen is much wider than the western,

which is overhung by bulky hills. There are many pleasant villas on both sides of the river, some of which stand a considerable way up the hills; of the villas the most noted is Plas Newydd at the foot of the Berwyn, built by two Irish ladies of high rank, who resided in it for nearly half a century, and were celebrated throughout Europe by the name of the Ladies of Llangollen.

The view of the hill of Dinas Bran, from the southern side of Llangollen, would be much more complete were it not for a bulky excrescence, towards its base, which prevents the gazer from obtaining a complete view. The name of Llangollen signifies the church of Collen, and the vale and village take their name from the church, which was originally dedicated to Saint Collen, though some, especially the neighbouring peasantry suppose that Llangollen is a compound of Llan a church and Collen a hazel-wood, and that the church was called the church of the hazel-wood from the number of hazels in the neighbourhood. Collen, according to a legendary life, which exists of

him in Welsh, was a Briton by birth, and of illustrious ancestry. He served for some time abroad as a soldier against Julian the Apostate, and slew a Pagan champion who challenged the best man amongst the Christians. Returning to his own country he devoted himself to religion, and became Abbot of Glastonbury, but subsequently retired to a cave on the side of a mountain, where he lived a life of great austerity. Once as he was lying in his cell he heard two men out abroad discoursing about Wyn Ab Nudd, and saying that he was king of the Tylwyth Teg or Fairies, and lord of Unknown, whereupon Collen thrusting his head out of his cave told them to hold their tongues, for that Wyn Ab Nudd and his host were merely devils. At dead of night he heard a knocking at the door, and on his asking who was there, a voice said: "I am a messenger from Wyn Ab Nudd, king of Unknown, and I am come to summon thee to appear before my master to-morrow, at mid-day, on the top of the hill."

Collen did not go—the next night there was

the same knocking and the same message. Still Collen did not go. The third night the messenger came again and repeated his summons, adding that if he did not go it would be the worse for him. The next day Collen made some holy water, put it into a pitcher and repaired to the top of the hill, where he saw a wonderfully fine castle, attendants in magnificent liveries, youths and damsels dancing with nimble feet, and a man of honorable presence before the gate, who told him that the king was expecting him to dinner. Collen followed the man into the castle, and beheld the king on a throne of gold, and a table magnificently spread before him. The king welcomed Collen, and begged him to taste of the dainties on the table, adding that he hoped that in future he would reside with him. "I will not eat of the leaves of the forest," said Collen.

"Did you ever see men better dressed?" said the king, "than my attendants here in red and blue?"

"Their dress is good enough," said Collen, "considering what kind of dress it is."

"What kind of dress is it?" said the king.

Collen replied: "The red on the one side denotes burning, and the blue on the other side denotes freezing." Then drawing forth his sprinkler, he flung the holy water in the faces of the king and his people, whereupon the whole vision disappeared, so that there was neither castle nor attendants, nor youth nor damsel, nor musician with his music, nor banquet, nor anything to be seen save the green bushes.

The valley of the Dee, of which the Llangollen district forms part, is called in the British tongue Glyn-dyfrdwy—that is, the valley of the Dwy or Dee. The celebrated Welsh chieftain, generally known as Owen Glendower, was surnamed after this valley, the whole of which belonged to him, and in which he had two or three places of strength, though his general abode was a castle in Sycharth, a valley to the south-east of the Berwyn, and distant about twelve miles from Llangollen.

Connected with the Dee there is a wonderful Druidical legend to the following effect. The Dee springs from two fountains, high up in

Merionethshire, called Dwy Fawr and Dwy Fach, or the great and little Dwy, whose waters pass through those of the lake of Bala without mingling with them, and come out at its northern extremity. These fountains had their names from two individuals, Dwy Fawr and Dwy Fach, who escaped from the Deluge, when all the rest of the human race were drowned, and the passing of the waters of the two fountains through the lake, without being confounded with its flood, is emblematic of the salvation of the two individuals from the Deluge, of which the lake is a type.

Dinas Bran, which crowns the top of the mighty hill on the northern side of the valley, is a ruined stronghold of unknown antiquity. The name is generally supposed to signify Crow Castle, bran being the British word for crow, and flocks of crows being frequently seen hovering over it. It may, however, mean the castle of Bran or Brennus, or the castle above the Bran, a brook which flows at its foot.

Dinas Bran was a place quite impregnable in the old time, and served as a retreat to Gruffydd,

son of Madawg, from the rage of his countrymen, who were incensed against him because, having married Emma, the daughter of James Lord Audley, he had, at the instigation of his wife and father-in-law, sided with Edward the First against his own native sovereign. But though it could shield him from his foes, it could not preserve him from remorse and the stings of conscience, of which he speedily died.

At present the place consists only of a few ruined walls, and probably consisted of little more two or three hundred years ago: Roger Cyffyn a Welsh bard, who flourished at the beginning of the seventeenth century, wrote an englyn upon it, of which the following is a translation:—

Gone, gone are thy gates, Dinas Bran on the height!
Thy warders are blood-crows and ravens, I trow;
Now no one will wend from the field of the fight
To the fortress on high, save the raven and crow.

CHAPTER VII

POOR BLACK CAT.—DISSENTERS.—PERSECUTION.—WHAT IMPUDENCE!

THE house or cottage, for it was called a cottage though it consisted of two stories, in which my wife had procured lodgings for us, was situated in the Northern suburb. Its front was towards a large perllan or orchard, which sloped down gently to the banks of the Dee; its back was towards the road leading from Wrexham, behind which was a high bank, on the top of which was a canal called in Welsh the Camlas, whose commencement was up the valley about two miles west. A little way up the road, towards Wrexham, was the vicarage and a little way down was a flannel factory, beyond which was a small inn, with pleasure grounds, kept by an individual who had once

been a gentleman's servant. The mistress of the house was a highly respectable widow, who with a servant maid was to wait upon us. It was as agreeable a place in all respects as people like ourselves could desire.

As I and my family sat at tea in our parlour, an hour or two after we had taken possession of our lodgings, the door of the room and that of the entrance to the house being open, on account of the fineness of the weather, a poor black cat entered hastily, sat down on the carpet by the table, looked up towards us, and mewed piteously. I never had seen so wretched a looking creature. It was dreadfully attenuated, being little more than skin and bone, and was sorely afflicted with an eruptive malady. And here I may as well relate the history of this cat previous to our arrival which I subsequently learned by bits and snatches. It had belonged to a previous vicar of Llangollen, and had been left behind at his departure. His successor brought with him dogs and cats, who conceiving, that the late vicar's cat had no business at the vicarage, drove it forth to seek another home, which, however, it

could not find. Almost all the people of the suburb were dissenters, as indeed were the generality of the people of Llangollen, and knowing the cat to be a church cat, not only would not harbour it, but did all they could to make it miserable; whilst the few who were not dissenters, would not receive it into their houses, either because they had cats of their own, or dogs, or did not want a cat, so that the cat had no home and was dreadfully persecuted by nine-tenths of the suburb. O, there never was a cat so persecuted as that poor Church of England animal, and solely on account of the opinions which it was supposed to have imbibed in the house of its late master, for I never could learn that the dissenters of the suburb, nor indeed of Llangollen in general, were in the habit of persecuting other cats; the cat was a Church of England cat, and that was enough: stone it, hang it, drown it! were the cries of almost everybody. If the workmen of the flannel factory, all of whom were Calvinistic Methodists, chanced to get a glimpse of it in the road from the windows of the building, they

would sally forth in a body, and with sticks, stones, or for want of other weapons, with clots of horse-dung, of which there was always plenty on the road, would chase it up the high bank or perhaps over the camlas—the inhabitants of a small street between our house and the factory leading from the road to the river, all of whom were dissenters, if they saw it moving about the perllan, into which their back windows looked, would shriek and hoot at it, and fling anything of no value, which came easily to hand at the head or body of the ecclesiastical cat. The good woman of the house, who though a very excellent person, was a bitter dissenter, whenever she saw it upon her ground or heard it was there, would make after it, frequently attended by her maid Margaret, and her young son, a boy about nine years of age, both of whom hated the cat, and were always ready to attack it, either alone or in company, and no wonder, the maid being not only a dissenter, but a class teacher, and the boy not only a dissenter, but intended for the dissenting ministry. Where it got its food, and food it sometimes must have

got, for even a cat, an animal known to have nine lives, cannot live without food, was only known to itself, as was the place where it lay, for even a cat must lie down sometimes; though a labouring man who occasionally dug in the garden told me he believed that in the spring-time it ate freshets, and the woman of the house once said that she believed it sometimes slept in the hedge, which hedge, by the bye, divided our perllan from the vicarage grounds, which were very extensive. Well might the cat after having led this kind of life for better than two years look mere skin and bone when it made its appearance in our apartment, and have an eruptive malady, and also a bronchitic cough, for I remember it had both. How it came to make its appearance there is a mystery, for it had never entered the house before, even when there were lodgers; that it should not visit the woman, who was its declared enemy, was natural enough, but why if it did not visit her other lodgers, did it visit us? Did instinct keep it aloof from them? Did instinct draw it towards us? We gave it some bread-and-butter, and a

little tea with milk and sugar. It ate and drank and soon began to purr. The good woman of the house was horrified when on coming in to remove the things she saw the church cat on her carpet. "What impudence!" she exclaimed, and made towards it, but on our telling her that we did not expect that it should be disturbed, she let it alone. A very remarkable circumstance was, that though the cat had hitherto been in the habit of flying not only from her face, but the very echo of her voice, it now looked her in the face with perfect composure, as much as to say, "I don't fear you, for I know that I am now safe and with my own people." It stayed with us two hours and then went away. The next morning it returned. To be short, though it went away every night, it became our own cat, and one of our family. I gave it something which cured it of its eruption, and through good treatment it soon lost its other ailments and began to look sleek and bonny.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE MOWERS.—DEEP WELSH.—EXTENSIVE VIEW.—OLD CELTIC HATRED.—FISH-PRESERVING.—SMOLLET'S MORGAN.

NEXT morning I set out to ascend Dinas Bran, a number of children, almost entirely girls, followed me. I asked them why they came after me. "In the hope that you will give us something," said one in very good English. I told them that I should give them nothing, but they still followed me. A little way up the hill I saw some men cutting hay. I made an observation to one of them respecting the fineness of the weather; he answered civilly, and rested on his scythe, whilst the others pursued their work. I asked him whether he was a farming man; he told me that he was not; that he generally worked at the flannel manufactory,

but that for some days past he had not been employed there, work being slack, and had on that account joined the mowers in order to earn a few shillings. I asked him how it was he knew how to handle a scythe, not being bred up a farming man; he smiled, and said that, somehow or other, he had learnt to do so.

"You speak very good English," said I, "have you much Welsh?"

"Plenty," said he; "I am a real Welshman."

"Can you read Welsh?" said I.

"O, yes!" he replied.

"What books have you read?" said I.

"I have read the Bible, sir, and one or two other books."

"Did you ever read the Bardd Cwsg?" said I.

He looked at me with some surprise. "No," said he, after a moment or two, "I have never read it. I have seen it, but it was far too deep Welsh for me."

"I have read it," said I.

"Are you a Welshman?" said he.

"No," said I; "I am an Englishman."

"And how is it," said he, "that you can read Welsh without being a Welshman?"

"I learned to do so," said I, "even as you learned to mow, without being bred up to farming work."

"Ah!" said he, "but it is easier to learn to mow than to read the Bardd Cwsg."

"I don't know that," said I; "I have taken up a scythe a hundred times, but I cannot mow."

"Will your honour take mine now, and try again?" said he.

"No," said I, "for if I take your scythe in hand I must give you a shilling, you know, by mowers' law."

He gave a broad grin, and I proceeded up the hill. When he rejoined his companions he said something to them in Welsh, at which they all laughed. I reached the top of the hill, the children still attending me.

The view over the vale is very beautiful; but on no side, except in the direction of the west, is it very extensive; Dinas Bran being on all other sides overtopped by other hills: in that

direction, indeed, the view is extensive enough, reaching on a fine day even to the Wyddfa or peak of Snowdon, a distance of sixty miles, at least as some say, who perhaps ought to add to very good eyes, which mine are not. The day that I made my first ascent of Dinas Bran was very clear, but I do not think I saw the Wyddfa then from the top of Dinas Bran. It is true I might see it without knowing it, being utterly unacquainted with it, except by name; but I repeat I do not think I saw it, and I am quite sure that I did not see it from the top of Dinas Bran on a subsequent ascent, on a day equally clear, when if I had seen the Wyddfa I must have recognized it having been at its top. As I stood gazing around the children danced about upon the grass, and sang a song. The song was English. I descended the hill; they followed me to its foot, and then left me. The children of the lower class of Llangollen are great pests to visitors. The best way to get rid of them is to give them nothing: I followed that plan, and was not long troubled with them.

Arrived at the foot of the hill, I walked along the bank of the canal to the west. Presently I came to a barge lying by the bank; the boatman was in it. I entered into conversation with him. He told me that the canal and its branches extended over a great part of England. That the boats carried slates—that he had frequently gone as far as Paddington by the canal—that he was generally three weeks on the journey—that the boatmen and their families lived in the little cabins aft—that the boatmen were all Welsh—that they could read English, but little or no Welsh—that English was a much more easy language to read than Welsh—that they passed by many towns, among others Northampton, and that he liked no place so much as Llangollen. I proceeded till I came to a place where some people were putting huge slates into a canal boat. It was near a bridge which crossed the Dee, which was on the left. I stopped and entered into conversation with one, who appeared to be the principal man. He told me amongst other things that he was a blacksmith from the neighbourhood of

Rhiwabon, and that the flags were intended for the flooring of his premises. In the boat was an old bareheaded, bare-armed fellow, who presently joined in the conversation in very broken English. He told me that his name was Joseph Hughes, and that he was a real Welshman and was proud of being so; he expressed a great dislike for the English, who he said were in the habit of making fun of him and ridiculing his language; he said that all the fools that he had known were Englishmen. I told him that all Englishmen were not fools; "but the greater part are," said he. "Look how they work," said I. "Yes," said he, "some of them are good at breaking stones for the road, but not more than one in a hundred." "There seems to be something of the old Celtic hatred to the Saxon in this old fellow," said I to myself, as I walked away.

I proceeded till I came to the head of the canal, where the navigation first commences. It is close to a weir, over which the Dee falls. Here there is a little floodgate, through which water rushes from an oblong pond or reservoir, fed by

water from a corner of the upper part of the weir. On the left, or south-west side, is a mound of earth fenced with stones which is the commencement of the bank of the canal. The pond or reservoir above the floodgate is separated from the weir by a stone wall on the left, or south-west side. This pond has two flood-gates, the one already mentioned, which opens into the canal, and another, on the other side of the stone mound, opening to the lower part of the weir. Whenever, as a man told me who was standing near, it is necessary to lay the bed of the canal dry, in the immediate neighbourhood for the purpose of making repairs, the floodgate to the canal is closed, and the one to the lower part of the weir is opened, and then the water from the pond flows into the Dee, whilst a sluice, near the first lock, lets out the water of the canal into the river. The head of the canal is situated in a very beautiful spot. To the left or south is a lofty hill covered with wood. To the right is a beautiful slope or lawn on the top of which is a pretty villa, to which you can get by a little wooden bridge over the floodgate of the canal,

and indeed forming part of it. Few things are so beautiful in their origin as this canal, which, be it known, with its locks and its aqueducts, the grandest of which last is the stupendous erection near Stockport, which by the bye filled my mind when a boy with wonder, constitutes the grand work of England, and yields to nothing in the world of the kind, with the exception of the great canal of China.

Retracing my steps some way I got upon the river's bank and then again proceeded in the direction of the west. I soon came to a cottage nearly opposite a bridge, which led over the river, not the bridge which I have already mentioned, but one much smaller, and considerably higher up the valley. The cottage had several dusky outbuildings attached to it, and a paling before it. Leaning over the paling in his shirt-sleeves was a dark-faced, short, thickset man, who saluted me in English, returned his salutation, stopped, and was soon in conversation with him. I praised the beauty of the river and its banks: he said that both were beautiful and delightful in summer, but not at all in

winter, for then the trees and bushes on the banks were stripped of their leaves, and the river was a frightful torrent. He asked me if I had been to see the place called the Robber's Leap, as strangers generally went to see it. I inquired where it was.

"Yonder," said he, pointing to some distance down the river.

"Why is it called the Robber's Leap?" said I.

"It is called the Robber's Leap, or Llam y Lleidyr," said he, "because a thief pursued by justice once leaped across the river there and escaped. It was an awful leap, and he well deserved to escape after taking it." I told him that I should go and look at it on some future opportunity, and then asked if there were many fish in the river. He said there were plenty of salmon and trout, and that owing to the river being tolerably high, a good many had been caught during the last few days. I asked him who enjoyed the right of fishing in the river. He said that in these parts the fishing belonged to two or three proprietors, who either preserved

the fishing for themselves, as they best could by means of keepers, or let it out to other people; and that many individuals came not only from England, but from France and Germany and even Russia for the purpose of fishing, and that the keepers of the proprietors from whom they purchased permission to fish went with them, to show them the best places, and to teach them how to fish. He added that there was a report that the river would shortly be rhydd or free and open to any one. I said that it would be a bad thing to fling the river open, as in that event the fish would be killed at all times and seasons, and eventually all destroyed. He replied that he questioned whether more fish would be taken then than now, and that I must not imagine that the fish were much protected by what was called preserving; that the people to whom the lands in the neighbourhood belonged, and those who paid for fishing did not catch a hundredth part of the fish which were caught in the river: that the proprietors went with their keepers, and perhaps caught two or three stone of fish, or that strangers went with

the keepers, whom they paid for teaching them how to fish, and perhaps caught half-a-dozen fish, and that shortly after the keepers would return and catch on their own account sixty stone of fish from the very spot where the proprietors or strangers had great difficulty in catching the two or three stone or the half-dozen fish, or the poachers would go and catch a yet greater quantity. He added that gentry did not understand how to catch fish, and that to attempt to preserve was nonsense. I told him that if the river was flung open everybody would fish; he said that I was much mistaken, that hundreds who were now poachers, would then keep at home, mind their proper trades, and never use line or spear; that folks always longed to do what they were forbidden, and that Shimei would never have crossed the brook provided he had not been told he should be hanged if he did. That he himself had permission to fish in the river whenever he pleased, but never availed himself of it, though in his young time, when he had no leave, he had been an arrant poacher.

The manners and way of speaking of this old personage put me very much in mind of those of Morgan, described by Smollet in his immortal novel of "Roderick Random." I had more discourse with him: I asked him in what line of business he was, he told me that he sold coals. From his complexion, and the hue of his shirt, I had already concluded that he was in some grimy trade. I then inquired of what religion he was, and received for answer that he was a Baptist. I thought that both himself and part of his apparel would look all the better for a good immersion. We talked of the war then raging—he said it was between the false prophet and the Dragon. I asked him who the Dragon was—he said the Turk. I told him that the Pope was far worse than either the Turk or the Russian, that his religion was the vilest idolatry, and that he would let no one alone. That it was the Pope who drove his fellow religionists the Anabaptists out of the Netherlands. He asked me how long ago that was. Between two and three hundred years I replied. He asked me the meaning of the

word Anabaptist; I told him; whereupon he expressed great admiration for my understanding, and said that he hoped he should see me again.

I inquired of him to what place the bridge led; he told me that if I passed over it, and ascended a high bank beyond, I should find myself on the road from Llangollen to Corwen, and that if I wanted to go to Llangollen I must turn to the left. I thanked him, and passing over the bridge, and ascending the bank, found myself upon a broad road. I turned to the left, and walking briskly, in about half an hour reached our cottage in the northern suburb, where I found my family and dinner awaiting me.

CHAPTER IX.

THE DINNER.—ENGLISH FOIBLES.—PENGWERN.—THE YEW-TREE.—CARN-LLEIDYR—APPLICATIONS OF A TERM.

FOR dinner we had salmon and leg of mutton; the salmon from the Dee, the leg from the neighbouring Berwyn. The salmon was good enough, but I had eaten better; and here it will not be amiss to say, that the best salmon in the world is caught in the Suir, a river that flows past the beautiful town of Clonmel in Ireland. As for the leg of mutton it was truly wonderful; nothing so good had I ever tasted in the shape of a leg of mutton. The leg of mutton of Wales beats the leg of mutton of any other country, and I had never tasted a Welsh leg of mutton before. Certainly I shall never forget that first Welsh leg of mutton which I tasted, rich but delicate, replete with

juices derived from the aromatic herbs of the noble Berwyn, cooked to a turn, and weighing just four pounds.

> "O its savoury smell was great,
> Such as well might tempt, I trow,
> One that's dead to lift his brow."

Let any one who wishes to eat leg of mutton in perfection go to Wales, but mind you to eat leg of mutton only; Welsh leg of mutton is superlative; but with the exception of the leg, the mutton of Wales is decidedly inferior to that of many other parts of Britain.

Here, perhaps, as I have told the reader what we ate for dinner, it will be as well to tell him what we drank at dinner. Let him know then, that with our salmon we drank water, and with our mutton ale, even ale of Llangollen; but not the best ale of Llangollen; it was very fair; but I subsequently drank far better Llangollen ale than that which I drank at our first dinner in our cottage at Llangollen.

In the evening I went across the bridge and strolled along in a south-east direction. Just as I had cleared the suburb a man joined me

from a cottage, on the top of a high bank, whom I recognized as the mower with whom I had held discourse in the morning. He saluted me and asked me if I were taking a walk, I told him I was, whereupon he said that if I were not too proud to wish to be seen walking with a poor man like himself, he should wish to join me. I told him I should be glad of his company, and that I was not ashamed to be seen walking with any person, however poor, who conducted himself with propriety. He replied that I must be very different from my countrymen in general, who were ashamed to be seen walking with any people, who were not, at least, as well-dressed as themselves. I said that my country-folk in general had a great many admirable qualities, but at the same time a great many foibles, foremost amongst which last was a crazy admiration for what they called gentility, which made them sycophantic to their superiors in station, and extremely insolent to those whom they considered below them. He said that I had spoken his very thoughts, and

then asked me whether I wished to be taken the most agreeable walk near Llangollen.

On my replying by all means he led me along the road to the south-east. A pleasant road it proved: on our right at some distance was the mighty Berwyn; close on our left the hill called Pen y Coed. I asked him what was beyond the Berwyn?

"A very wild country, indeed," he replied, "consisting of wood, rock, and river; in fact, an anialwch."

He then asked if I knew the meaning of anialwch.

"A wilderness," I replied, "you will find the word in the Welsh Bible."

"Very true, sir," said he, "it was there I met it, but I did not know the meaning of it, till it was explained to me by one of our teachers."

On my inquiring of what religion he was, he told me he was a Calvinistic Methodist.

We passed an ancient building which stood on our right. I turned round to look at it. Its

back was to the road: at its eastern end was a fine arched window like the oriel window of a church.

"That building," said my companion, "is called Pengwern Hall. It was once a convent of nuns; a little time ago a farm-house, but is now used as a barn, and a place of stowage. Till lately it belonged to the Mostyn family, but they disposed of it, with the farm on which it stood, together with several other farms, to certain people from Liverpool, who now live yonder," pointing to a house a little way farther on. I still looked at the edifice.

"You seem to admire the old building," said my companion.

"I was not admiring it," said I; "I was thinking of the difference between its present and former state. Formerly it was a place devoted to gorgeous idolatry and obscene lust; now it is a quiet old barn in which hay and straw are placed, and broken tumbrels stowed away: surely the hand of God is visible here?"

"It is so, sir," said the man in a respectful tone, "and so it is in another place in this

neighbourhood. About three miles from here, in the north-west part of the valley, is an old edifice. It is now a farm-house, but was once a splendid abbey, and was called——."

"The abbey of the vale of the cross," said I, "I have read a deal about it. Iolo Goch, the bard of your celebrated hero, Owen Glendower, was buried somewhere in its precincts."

We went on: my companion took me over a stile behind the house which he had pointed out, and along a path through hazel coppices. After a little time I inquired whether there were any Papists in Llangollen.

"No," said he, "there is not one of that family at Llangollen, but I believe there are some in Flintshire, at a place called Holywell, where there is a pool or fountain, the waters of which it is said they worship."

"And so they do," said I, "true to the old Indian superstition, of which their religion is nothing but a modification. The Indians and sepoys worship stocks and stones, and the river Ganges, and our Papists worship stocks and stones, holy wells and fountains."

He put some questions to me about the origin of nuns and friars. I told him they originated in India, and made him laugh heartily by showing him the original identity of nuns and nautch-girls, begging priests and begging Brahmins. We passed by a small house with an enormous yew-tree before it; I asked him who lived there.

"No one," he replied, "it is to let. It was originally a cottage, but the proprietors have furbished it up a little, and call it yew-tree villa."

"I suppose they would let it cheap," said I.

"By no means," he replied, "they ask eighty pounds a year for it."

"What could have induced them to set such a rent upon it?" I demanded.

"The yew-tree, sir, which is said to be the largest in Wales. They hope that some of the grand gentry will take the house for the romance of the yew-tree, but somehow or other nobody has taken it, though it has been to let for three seasons."

We soon came to a road leading east and west.

"This way," said he, pointing in the direction of the west, "leads back to Llangollen, the other to Offa's Dyke and England."

We turned to the west. He inquired if I had ever heard before of Offa's Dyke.

"O yes," said I, "it was built by an old Saxon king called Offa, against the incursions of the Welsh."

"There was a time," said my companion, "when it was customary for the English to cut off the ears of every Welshman, who was found to the east of the dyke, and for the Welsh to hang every Englishman whom they found to the west of it. Let us be thankful that we are now more humane to each other. We are now on the north side of Pen y Coed. Do you know the meaning of Pen y Coed, sir?"

"Pen y Coed," said I, "means the head of the wood. I suppose that in the old time the mountain looked over some extensive forest, even as the nunnery of Pengwern looked origi-

nally over an alder-swamp, for Pengwern means the head of the alder-swamp."

"So it does, sir, I shouldn't wonder if you could tell me the real meaning of a word, about which I have thought a good deal, and about which I was puzzling my head last night as I lay in bed."

"What may it be?" said I.

"Carn-lleidyr," he replied: "now, sir, do you know the meaning of that word?"

"I think I do," said I.

"What may it be, sir?"

"First let me hear what you conceive its meaning to be," said I.

"Why, sir, I should say that Carn-lleidyr is an out-and-out thief—one worse than a thief of the common sort. Now, if I steal a matrass I am a lleidyr, that is a thief of the common sort; but if I carry it to a person, and he buys it, knowing it to be stolen, I conceive he is a far worse thief than I; in fact, a carn-lleidyr."

"The word is a double word," said I, "compounded of carn and lleidyr. The original meaning of carn is a heap of stones, and carn-

lleidyr means properly a thief without house or home, and with no place on which to rest his head, save the carn or heap of stones on the bleak top of the mountain. For a long time the word was only applied to a thief of that description, who, being without house and home, was more desperate than other thieves, and as savage and brutish as the wolves and foxes with whom he occasionally shared his pillow, the carn. In course of time, however, the original meaning was lost or disregarded, and the term carn-lleidyr was applied to any particularly dishonest person. At present there can be no impropriety in calling a person who receives a matrass, knowing it to be stolen, a carn-lleidyr, seeing that he is worse than the thief who stole it, or in calling a knavish attorney a carn-lleidyr, seeing that he does far more harm than a common pick-pocket; or in calling the Pope so, seeing that he gets huge sums of money out of people by pretending to be able to admit their souls to heaven, or to hurl them to the other place, knowing all the time that he has no such power; perhaps, indeed, at the present day

the term carn-lleidyr is more applicable to the Pope than to any one else, for he is certainly the arch thief of the world. So much for Carn-lleidyr. But I must here tell you that the term carn may be applied to any one who is particularly bad or disagreeable in any respect, and now I remember, has been applied for centuries both in prose and poetry. One Lewis Glyn Cothi, a poet, who lived more than three hundred years ago, uses the word carn in the sense of arrant or exceedingly bad, for in his abusive ode to the town of Chester, he says that the women of London itself were never more carn strumpets than those of Chester, by which he means that there were never more arrant harlots in the world than those of the cheese capital. And the last of your great poets, Gronwy Owen, who flourished about the middle of the last century, complains in a letter to a friend, whilst living in a village of Lancashire, that he was amongst Carn Saeson. He found all English disagreeable enough, but those of Lancashire particularly so—savage, brutish louts, out-and-

out John Bulls, and therefore he called them Carn Saeson."

"Thank you, sir," said my companion; "I now thoroughly understand the meaning of carn. Whenever I go to Chester, and a dressedup madam jostles against me, I shall call her carn-butein. The Pope of Rome I shall in future term carn-lleidyr y byd, or the arch thief of the world. And whenever I see a stupid, brutal Englishman swaggering about Llangollen, and looking down upon us poor Welsh, I shall say to myself Get home, you carn Sais! Well, sir, we are now near Llangollen; I must turn to the left. You go straight forward. I never had such an agreeable walk in my life. May I ask your name?"

I told him my name, and asked him for his.

"Edward Jones," he replied.

CHAPTER X.

THE BERWYN.—MOUNTAIN COTTAGE.—THE BARBER'S POLE.

On the following morning I strolled up the Berwyn on the south-west of the town, by a broad winding path, which was at first very steep, but by degrees became less so. When I had accomplished about three parts of the ascent I came to a place where the road, or path, divided into two. I took the one to the left, which seemingly led to the top of the mountain, and presently came to a cottage from which a dog rushed barking towards me; an old woman, however, coming to the door called him back. I said a few words to her in Welsh, whereupon in broken English she asked me to enter the cottage and take a glass of milk. I went in and sat down on a chair which a sickly-looking

young woman handed to me. I asked her in English who she was, but she made no answer, whereupon the old woman told me that she was her daughter and had no English. I then asked her in Welsh what was the matter with her she replied that she had the cryd or ague. The old woman now brought me a glass of milk, and said in the Welsh language that she hoped I should like it. What further conversation we had was in the Cambrian tongue. I asked the name of the dog, who was now fondling upon me, and was told that his name was Pharaoh. I inquired if they had any books and was shown two, one a common Bible printed by the Bible Society, and the other a volume in which the book of prayer of the Church of England was bound up with the Bible, both printed at Oxford, about the middle of the last century. I found that both mother and daughter were Calvinistic Methodists. After a little further discourse I got up and gave the old woman twopence for the milk; she accepted it, but with great reluctance. I inquired whether by following the road I could get to the Pen y bryn or the top

of the hill. They shook their heads and the young woman said that I could not, as the road presently took a turn and went down. I asked her how I could get to the top of the hill. "Which part of the top?" said she. "I'r gor-uchaf," I replied. "That must be where the barber's pole stands," said she. "Why does the barber's pole stand there?" said I. "A barber was hanged there a long time ago," said she, "and the pole was placed to show the spot." Why was he hanged?" said I. "For murdering his wife," said she. I asked her some questions about the murder, but the only information she could give me was, that it was a very bad murder and occurred a long time ago. I had observed the pole from our garden, at Llangollen, but had concluded that it was a common flag-staff. I inquired the way to it. It was not visible from the cottage, but they gave me directions how to reach it. I bade them farewell, and in about a quarter of an hour reached the pole on the top of the hill. I imagined that I should have a glorious view of the vale of Llangollen from the spot where it stood; the

view, however, did not answer my expectations. I returned to Llangollen by nearly the same way by which I had come.

The remainder of the day I spent entirely with my family, whom at their particular request I took in the evening to see Plas Newydd, once the villa of the two ladies of Llangollen. It lies on the farther side of the bridge, at a little distance from the back part of the church. There is a thoroughfare through the grounds, which are not extensive. Plas Newydd or the New Place is a small gloomy mansion, with a curious dairy on the right-hand side, as you go up to it, and a remarkable stone pump. An old man whom we met in the grounds, and with whom I entered into conversation, said that he remembered the building of the house, and that the place where it now stands was called before its erection Pen y maes, or the head of the field.

CHAPTER XI.

WELSH FARM-HOUSE.—A POET'S GRANDSON.—HOSPITALITY.—MOUNTAIN VILLAGE.—MADOC.—THE NATIVE VALLEY.—CORPSE CANDLES.—THE MIDNIGHT CALL.

My curiosity having been rather excited with respect to the country beyond the Berwyn, by what my friend, the intelligent flannel-worker, had told me about it, I determined to go and see it. Accordingly on Friday morning I set out. Having passed by Pengwern Hall I turned up a lane in the direction of the south, with a brook on the right running amongst hazels, I presently arrived at a small farm-house standing on the left with a little yard before it. Seeing a woman at the door I asked her in English if the road in which I was would take me across the mountain—she said it would, and forthwith cried to a man working in a field who left his work and came towards us. "That is my

husband," said she; "he has more English than I."

The man came up and addressed me in very good English: he had a brisk, intelligent look, and was about sixty. I repeated the question, which I had put to his wife, and he also said that by following the road I could get across the mountain. We soon got into conversation. He told me that the little farm in which he lived belonged to the person who had bought Pengwern Hall. He said that he was a good kind of gentleman, but did not like the Welsh. I asked him if the gentleman in question did not like the Welsh why he came to live among them. He smiled, and I then said that I liked the Welsh very much, and was particularly fond of their language. He asked me whether I could read Welsh, and on my telling him I could, he said that if I would walk in he would show me a Welsh book. I went with him and his wife into a neat kind of kitchen, flagged with stone, where were several young people, their children. I spoke some Welsh to them which appeared to give them great satis-

faction. The man went to a shelf and taking down a book put it into my hand. It was a Welsh book, and the title of it in English was "Evening Work of the Welsh." It contained the lives of illustrious Welshmen, commencing with that of Cadwalader. I read a page of it aloud, while the family stood round and wondered to hear a Saxon read their language. I entered into discourse with the man about Welsh poetry and repeated the famous prophecy of Taliesin about the Coiling Serpent. I asked him if the Welsh had any poets at the present day. "Plenty," said he, "and good ones—Wales can never be without a poet." Then after a pause he said, that he was the grandson of a great poet.

"Do you bear his name?" said I.

"I do," he replied.

"What may it be?"

"Hughes," he answered.

"Two of the name of Hughes have been poets," said I—"one was Huw Hughes, generally termed the Bardd Coch, or red bard; he was an Anglesea man, and the friend of Lewis

Morris and Gronwy Owen—the other was Jonathan Hughes, where he lived I know not."

"He lived here, in this very house," said the man, "Jonathan Hughes was my grandfather!" and as he spoke his eyes flashed fire.

"Dear me!" said I, "I read some of his pieces thirty-two years ago when I was a lad in England. I think I can repeat some of the lines." I then repeated a quartet which I chanced to remember.

"Ah!" said the man, "I see you know his poetry. Come into the next room and I will show you his chair." He led me into a sleeping room on the right hand, where in a corner he showed me an antique three-cornered arm-chair. "That chair," said he, "my grandsire won at Llangollen, at an Eisteddfod of Bards. Various bards recited their poetry, but my grandfather won the prize. Ah, he was a good poet. He also won a prize of fifteen guineas at a meeting of bards in London."

We returned to the kitchen, where I found the good woman of the house waiting with a plate of bread-and-butter in one hand, and a

glass of buttermilk in the other—she pressed me to partake of both—I drank some of the buttermilk, which was excellent, and after a little more discourse shook the kind people by the hand and thanked them for their hospitality. As I was about to depart the man said that I should find the lane farther up very wet, and that I had better mount through a field at the back of the house. He took me to a gate, which he opened, and then pointed out the way which I must pursue. As I went away he said that both he and his family should be always happy to see me at Ty yn y Pistyll, which words, interpreted, are the house by the spout of water.

I went up the field with the lane on my right, down which ran a runnel of water, from which doubtless the house derived its name. I soon came to an unenclosed part of the mountain covered with gorse and whin, and still proceeding upward reached a road, which I subsequently learned was the main road from Llangollen over the hill. I was not long in gaining the top which was nearly level. Here

I stood for some time looking about me, having the vale of Llangollen to the north of me, and a deep valley abounding with woods and rocks to the south.

Following the road to the south, which gradually descended, I soon came to a place where a road diverged from the straight one to the left. As the left-hand road appeared to lead down a romantic valley I followed it. The scenery was beautiful—steep hills on each side. On the right was a deep ravine, down which ran a brook; the hill beyond it was covered towards the top with a wood, apparently of oak, between which and the ravine were small green fields. Both sides of the ravine were fringed with trees, chiefly ash. I descended the road which was zig-zag and steep, and at last arrived at the bottom of the valley, where was a small hamlet. On the farther side of the valley to the east was a steep hill on which were a few houses—at the foot of the hill was a brook crossed by an antique bridge of a single arch. I directed my course to the bridge, and after looking over the parapet, for a minute or two, upon the water

below, which was shallow and noisy, ascended a road which led up the hill: a few scattered houses were on each side. I soon reached the top of the hill, where were some more houses, those which I had seen from the valley below. I was in a Welsh mountain village, which put me much in mind of the villages which I had strolled through of old in Castile and La Mancha; there were the same silence and desolation here as yonder away—the houses were built of the same material, namely stone. I should perhaps have fancied myself for a moment in a Castilian or Manchegan mountain pueblicito, but for the abundance of trees which met my eye on every side.

In walking up this mountain village I saw no one, and heard no sound but the echo of my steps amongst the houses. As I returned, however, I saw a man standing at a door—he was a short figure, about fifty. He had an old hat on his head—a stick in his hand and was dressed in a duffel great coat.

"Good day, friend," said I; "what may be the name of this place?"

"Pont Fadog, sir, is its name, for want of a better."

"That's a fine name," said I; "it signifies in English the bridge of Madoc."

"Just so, sir; I see you know Welsh."

"And I see you know English," said I.

"Very little, sir; I can read English much better than I can speak it."

"So can I Welsh," said I. "I suppose the village is named after the bridge."

"No doubt it is, sir."

"And why was the bridge called the bridge of Madoc?" said I.

"Because one Madoc built it, sir."

"Was he the son of Owain Gwynedd?" said I.

"Ah, I see you know all about Wales, sir. Yes, sir; he built it, or I daresay he built it, Madawg ap Owain Gwynedd. I have read much about him—he was a great sailor, sir, and was the first to discover Tir y Gorllewin or America. Not many years ago his tomb was discovered there with an inscription in old Welsh—saying who he was, and how he loved

the sea. I have seen the lines which were found on the tomb."

"So have I," said I; "or at least those which were said to be found on a tomb: they run thus in English :—

> "Here after sailing far I Madoc lie,
> Of Owain Gwynedd lawful progeny:
> The verdant land had little charms for me;
> From earliest youth I loved the dark-blue sea."

"Ah, sir," said the man, "I see you know all about the son of Owain Gwynedd. Well, sir, those lines, or something like them, were found upon the tomb of Madoc in America."

"That I doubt," said I.

"Do you doubt, sir, that Madoc discovered America?"

"Not in the least," said I; "but I doubt very much that his tomb was ever discovered with the inscription which you allude to upon it."

"But it was, sir, I do assure you, and the descendants of Madoc and his people are still to be found in a part of America speaking the pure iaith Cymraeg better Welsh than we of Wales do."

"That I doubt," said I. "However, the idea

is a pretty one; therefore cherish it. This is a beautiful country."

"A very beautiful country, sir; there is none more beautiful in all Wales."

"What is the name of the river, which runs beneath the bridge?"

"The Ceiriog, sir."

"The Ceiriog," said I; "the Ceiriog!"

"Did you ever hear the name before, sir?"

"I have heard of the Eos Ceiriog," said I; "the Nightingale of Ceiriog."

"That was Huw Morris, sir; he was called the Nightingale of Ceiriog."

"Did he live hereabout?"

"O no, sir; he lived far away up towards the head of the valley, at a place called Pont y Meibion."

"Are you acquainted with his works?" said I.

"O yes, sir, at least with some of them. I have read the Marwnad on Barbara Middleton; and likewise the piece on Oliver and his men. Ah, it is a funny piece that—he did not like Oliver nor his men."

"Of what profession are you?" said I; "are you a schoolmaster or apothecary?"

"Neither, sir, neither; I am merely a poor shoemaker."

"You know a great deal for a shoemaker," said I.

"Ah, sir; there are many shoemakers in Wales who know much more than I."

"But not in England," said I. "Well, farewell."

"Farewell, sir. When you have any boots to mend or shoes, sir—I shall be happy to serve you."

"I do not live in these parts," said I.

"No, sir; but you are coming to live here."

"How do you know that?" said I.

"I know it very well, sir; you left these parts very young, and went far away—to the East Indies, sir, where you made a large fortune in the medical line, sir; you are now coming back to your own valley, where you will buy a property, and settle down, and try to recover your language, sir, and your health, sir; for you are not the person you pretend to be, sir; I

know you very well, and shall be happy to work for you."

"Well," said I, "if I ever settle down here, I shall be happy to employ you. Farewell."

I went back the way I had come, till I reached the little hamlet—seeing a small public-house, I entered it—a good-looking woman, who met me in the passage, ushered me into a neat sanded kitchen, handed me a chair, and inquired my commands; I sat down, and told her to bring me some ale; she brought it, and then seated herself by a bench close by the door.

"Rather a quiet place this," said I, "I have seen but two faces since I came over the hill, and yours is one."

"Rather too quiet, sir," said the good woman, "one would wish to have more visitors."

"I suppose," said I, "people from Llangollen occasionally come to visit you."

"Sometimes, sir, for curiosity's sake; but very rarely—the way is very steep."

"Do the Tylwyth Teg ever pay you visits?"

"The Tylwyth Teg, sir?"

"Yes; the fairies. Do they never come to

have a dance on the green sward in this neighbourhood?"

"Very rarely, sir; indeed, I do not know how long it is since they have been seen."

"You have never seen them?"

"I have not, sir; but I believe there are people living who have."

"Are corpse candles ever seen on the bank of that river?"

"I have never heard of more than one being seen, sir, and that was at a place where a tinker was drowned a few nights after—there came down a flood; and the tinker in trying to cross by the usual ford was drowned."

"And did the candle prognosticate, I mean foreshow his death?"

"It did, sir. When a person is to die his candle is seen a few nights before the time of his death."

"Have you ever seen a corpse candle?"

"I have, sir; and as you seem to be a respectable gentleman, I will tell you all about it. When I was a girl, I lived with my parents, a little way from here. I had a cousin, a very

good young man, who lived with his parents in the neighbourhood of our house. He was an exemplary young man, sir, and having a considerable gift of prayer, was intended for the ministry; but he fell sick, and shortly became very ill indeed. One evening when he was lying in this state, as I was returning home from milking, I saw a candle proceeding from my cousin's house. I stood still and looked at it. It moved slowly forward for a little way, and then mounted high in the air above the wood, which stood not far in front of the house, and disappeared. Just three nights after that my cousin died."

"And you think that what you saw was his corpse candle?"

"I do, sir! what else should it be?"

"Are deaths prognosticated by any other means than corpse candles?"

"They are, sir; by the knockers, and by a supernatural voice heard at night."

"Have you ever heard the knockers, or the supernatural voice?"

"I have not, sir; but my father and mother,

who are now dead, heard once a supernatural voice, and knocking. My mother had a sister who was married like herself, and expected to be confined. Day after day, however, passed away, without her confinement taking place. My mother expected every moment to be summoned to her assistance, and was so anxious about her that she could not rest at night. One night, as she lay in bed, by the side of her husband, between sleeping and waking, she heard of a sudden, a horse coming stump, stump, up to the door. Then there was a pause—she expected every moment to hear some one cry out, and tell her to come to her sister, but she heard no farther sound, neither voice nor stump of horse. She thought she had been deceived, so, without awakening her husband, she tried to go to sleep; but sleep she could not. The next night, at about the same time, she again heard a horse's feet coming stump, stump, up to the door. She now waked her husband and told him to listen. He did so, and both heard the stumping. Presently, the stumping ceased, and then there was a loud "Hey!" as if somebody

wished to wake them. "Hey!" said my father, and they both lay for a minute, expecting to hear something more, but they heard nothing. My father then sprang out of bed, and looked out of the window; it was bright moonlight, but he saw nothing. The next night, as they lay in bed both asleep, they were suddenly aroused by a loud and terrible knocking. Out sprang my father from the bed, flung open the window, and looked out, but there was no one at the door. The next morning, however, a messenger arrived with the intelligence that my aunt had had a dreadful confinement with twins in the night, and that both she and the babes were dead."

"Thank you," said I; and paying for my ale, I returned to Llangollen.

CHAPTER XII.

A CALVINISTIC METHODIST.—TURN FOR SAXON.—OUR CONGREGATION. PONT Y CYSSYLTAU.—CATHERINE LINGO.

I HAD inquired of the good woman of the house, in which we lived, whether she could not procure a person to accompany me occasionally in my walks, who was well acquainted with the strange nooks and corners of the country, and who could speak no language but Welsh; as I wished to increase my knowledge of colloquial Welsh by having a companion, who would be obliged, in all he had to say to me, to address me in Welsh, and to whom I should perforce have to reply in that tongue. The good lady had told me that there was a tenant of hers who lived in one of the cottages, which looked into the perllan, who, she believed, would be glad to

go with me, and was just the kind of man I was in quest of. The day after I had met with the adventures, which I have related in the preceding chapter, she informed me that the person in question was awaiting my orders in the kitchen. I told her to let me see him. He presently made his appearance. He was about forty-five years of age, of middle stature, and had a good-natured open countenance. His dress was poor, but clean.

"Well," said I to him in Welsh, "are you the Cumro who can speak no Saxon?"

"In truth, sir, I am."

"Are you sure that you know no Saxon?"

"Sir! I may know a few words, but I cannot converse in Saxon, nor understand a conversation in that tongue."

"Can you read Cumraeg?"

"In truth, sir, I can."

"What have you read in it?"

"I have read, sir, the Ysgrythyr-lan, till I have it nearly at the ends of my fingers."

"Have you read anything else besides the Holy Scripture?"

"I read the newspaper, sir, when kind friends lend it to me."

"In Cumraeg?"

"Yes, sir, in Cumraeg. I can read Saxon a little, but not sufficient to understand a Saxon newspaper."

"What newspaper do you read?"

"I read, sir, Yr Amserau."

"Is that a good newspaper?"

"Very good, sir, it is written by good men."

"Who are they?"

"They are our ministers, sir."

"Of what religion are you?"

"A Calvinistic Methodist, sir."

"Why are you of the Methodist religion?"

"Because it is the true religion, sir."

"You should not be bigoted. If I had more Cumraeg than I have, I would prove to you that the only true religion is that of the Lloegrian Church."

"In truth, sir, you could not do that; had you all the Cumraeg in Cumru you could not do that."

"What are you by trade?"

"I am a gwehydd, sir."

"What do you earn by weaving?"

"About five shillings a week, sir."

"Have you a wife?"

"I have, sir."

"Does she earn anything?"

"Very seldom, sir; she is a good wife, but is generally sick."

"Have you children?"

"I have three, sir."

"Do they earn anything?"

"My eldest son, sir, sometimes earns a few pence, the others are very small."

"Will you sometimes walk with me, if I pay you?"

"I shall be always glad to walk with you, sir, whether you pay me or not."

"Do you think it lawful to walk with one of the Lloegrian Church?"

"Perhaps, sir, I ought to ask the gentleman of the Lloegrian Church whether he thinks it lawful to walk with the poor Methodist weaver."

"Well, I think we may venture to walk with one another. What is your name?"

"John Jones, sir."

"Jones! Jones! I was walking with a man of that name the other night."

"The man with whom you walked the other night is my brother, sir, and what he said to me about you made me wish to walk with you also."

"But he spoke very good English."

"My brother had a turn for Saxon, sir; I had not. Some people have a turn for the Saxon, others have not. I have no Saxon, sir, my wife has digon iawn—my two youngest children speak good Saxon, sir, my eldest son not a word."

"Well; shall we set out?"

"If you please, sir."

"To what place shall we go?"

"Shall we go to the Pont y Cyssylltau, sir?"

"What is that?"

"A mighty bridge, sir, which carries the Camlas over a valley on its back."

"Good! let us go and see the bridge of the junction, for that I think is the meaning in Saxon of Pont y Cyssylltau."

We set out; my guide conducted me along the bank of the Camlas in the direction of Rhiwabon, that is towards the east. On the way we discoursed on various subjects, and understood each other tolerably well. I asked if he had ever been anything besides a weaver. He told me that when a boy he kept sheep on the mountain. "Why did you not go on keeping sheep?" said I; "I would rather keep sheep than weave."

"My parents wanted me at home, sir," said he; "and I was not sorry to go home; I earned little, and lived badly."

"A shepherd," said I, "can earn more than five shillings a week."

"I was never a regular shepherd, sir," said he. "But, sir, I would rather be a weaver with five shillings a week in Llangollen, than a shepherd with fifteen on the mountain. The life of a shepherd, sir, is perhaps not exactly what you and some other gentlefolks think. The shepherd bears much cold and wet, sir, and he is very lonely; no society save his sheep and dog. Then, sir, he has no privileges. I mean gospel privi-

leges. He does not look forward to Dydd Sul, as a day of llawenydd, of joy and triumph, as the weaver does; that is, if he is religiously disposed. The shepherd has no chapel, sir, like the weaver. Oh, sir, I say again that I would rather be a weaver in Llangollen with five shillings a week, than a shepherd on the hill with fifteen."

"Do you mean to say," said I, "that you live with your family on five shillings a week?"

"No, sir. I frequently do little commissions by which I earn something. Then, sir, I have friends, very good friends. A good lady of our congregation sent me this morning half-a-pound of butter. The people of our congregation are very kind to each other, sir."

"That is more," thought I to myself, "than the people of my congregation are; they are always cutting each other's throats." I next asked if he had been much about Wales.

"Not much, sir. However, I have been to Pen Caer Gybi, which you call Holy Head, and to Bethgelert, sir."

"What took you to those places?"

"I was sent to those places on business, sir; as I told you before, sir, I sometimes execute commissions. At Beth Gelert I stayed some time. It was there I married, sir; my wife comes from a place called Dol Gellyn near Beth Gelert."

"What was her name?"

"Her name was Jones, sir."

"What, before she married?"

"Yes, sir, before she married. You need not be surprised, sir; there are plenty of the name of Jones in Wales. The name of my brother's wife, before she married, was also Jones."

"Your brother is a clever man," said I.

"Yes, sir, for a Cumro he is clebber enough."

"For a Cumro?"

"Yes, sir, he is not a Saxon, you know."

"Are Saxons then so very clever?"

"O yes, sir; who so clebber? The clebberest people in Llangollen are Saxons; that is, at carnal things—for at spiritual things I do not think them at all clebber. Look at Mr. A., sir."

"Who is he?"

"Do you not know him, sir? I thought everybody knew Mr. A. He is a Saxon, sir, and keeps the inn on the road a little way below where you live. He is the clebberest man in Llangollen, sir. He can do everything. He is a great cook, and can wash clothes better than any woman. O, sir, for carnal things, who so clebber as your countrymen!"

After walking about four miles by the side of the canal we left it, and bearing to the right presently came to the aqueduct, which strode over a deep and narrow valley, at the bottom of which ran the Dee. "This is the Pont y Cysswllt, sir," said my guide; "it 's the finest bridge in the world, and no wonder, if what the common people say be true, namely that every stone cost a golden sovereign." We went along it; the height was awful. My guide, though he had been a mountain shepherd, confessed that he was somewhat afraid. "It gives me the pendro, sir," said he, "to look down." I too felt somewhat dizzy, as I looked over the parapet into the glen. The canal which this mighty bridge carries across the gulf is about nine feet wide,

and occupies about two-thirds of the width of the bridge and the entire western side. The footway is towards the east. From about the middle of the bridge there is a fine view of the forges on the Cefn Bach and also of a huge hill near it called the Cefn Mawr. We reached the termination, and presently crossing the canal by a little wooden bridge we came to a village. My guide then said, "If you please, sir, we will return by the old bridge, which leads across the Dee in the bottom of the vale." He then led me by a romantic road to a bridge on the west of the aqueduct, and far below. It seemed very ancient. "This is the old bridge, sir," said my guide; "it was built a hundred years before the Pont y Cysswllt was dreamt of." We now walked to the west, in the direction of Llangollen, along the bank of the river. Presently we arrived where the river, after making a bend, formed a pool. It was shaded by lofty trees, and to all appearance was exceedingly deep. I stopped to look at it, for I was struck with its gloomy horror. "That pool, sir," said John Jones, "is called Llyn y Meddwyn, the drunkard's

pool. It is called so, sir, because a drunken man once fell into it, and was drowned. There is no deeper pool in the Dee, sir, save one, a little below Llangollen, which is called the pool of Catherine Lingo. A girl of that name fell into it, whilst gathering sticks on the high bank above it. She was drowned, and the pool was named after her. I never look at either without shuddering, thinking how certainly I should be drowned if I fell in, for I cannot swim, sir."

"You should have learnt to swim when you were young," said I, "and to dive too. I know one who has brought up stones from the bottom, I dare say, of deeper pools than either, but he was a Saxon, and at carnal things, you know, none so clebber as the Saxons."

I found my guide a first-rate walker, and a good botanist, knowing the names of all the plants and trees in Welsh. By the time we returned to Llangollen I had formed a very high opinion of him, in which I was subsequently confirmed by what I saw of him during the period of our acquaintance, which was of some duration. He was very honest, disinterested,

and exceedingly good-humoured. It is true, he had his little skits occasionally at the Church, and showed some marks of hostility to the church cat, more especially when he saw it mounted on my shoulders; for the creature soon began to take liberties, and in less than a week after my arrival at the cottage, generally mounted on my back, when it saw me reading or writing, for the sake of the warmth. But setting aside those same skits at the Church and that dislike of the church cat, venial trifles after all, and easily to be accounted for, on the score of his religious education, I found nothing to blame and much to admire in John Jones the Calvinistic Methodist of Llangollen.

CHAPTER XIII.

DIVINE SERVICE.—LLANGOLLEN BELLS.—IOLO GOCH.—THE ABBEY.—TWM O'R NANT.—HOLY WELL.—THOMAS EDWARDS.

SUNDAY arrived—a Sunday of unclouded sunshine. We attended Divine service at church in the morning. The congregation was very numerous, but to all appearance consisted almost entirely of English visitors, like ourselves. There were two officiating clergymen, father and son. They both sat in a kind of oblong pulpit on the southern side of the church, at a little distance below the altar. The service was in English, and the elder gentleman preached; there was good singing and chanting.

After dinner I sat in an arbour in the perllan thinking of many things, amongst others, spiritual. Whilst thus engaged the sound of the church bells calling people to afternoon service,

came upon my ears. I listened and thought I had never heard bells with so sweet a sound. I had heard them in the morning, but without paying much attention to them, but as I now sat in the umbrageous arbour I was particularly struck with them. O, how sweetly their voice mingled with the low rush of the river, at the bottom of the perllan. I subsequently found that the bells of Llangollen were celebrated for their sweetness. Their merit indeed has even been admitted by an enemy; for a poet of the Calvinistic Methodist persuasion, one who calls himself Einion Du, in a very beautiful ode, commencing with—

"Tangnefedd i Llangollen,"

says that in no part of the world do bells call people so sweetly to church as those of Llangollen town.

In the evening, at about half-past six, I attended service again, but without my family. This time the congregation was not numerous, and was composed principally of poor people. The service and sermon were now in Welsh, the sermon was preached by the younger gentle-

man, and was on the building of the second temple, and, as far as I understood it, appeared to me to be exceedingly good.

On the Monday evening myself and family took a walk to the abbey. My wife and daughter, who are fond of architecture and ruins, were very anxious to see the old place. I too was anxious enough to see it, less from love of ruins and ancient architecture, than from knowing that a certain illustrious bard was buried in its precincts, of whom perhaps a short account will not be unacceptable to the reader.

This man, whose poetical appellation was Iolo Goch, but whose real name was Llwyd, was of a distinguished family, and Lord of Llechryd. He was born and generally resided at a place called Coed y Pantwn, in the upper part of the Vale of Clwyd. He was a warm friend and partisan of Owen Glendower, with whom he lived, at Sycharth, for some years before the great Welsh insurrection, and whom he survived, dying at an extreme old age beneath his own roof-tree at Coed y Pantwn. He composed pieces of great excellence on

various subjects; but the most remarkable of his compositions are decidedly certain ones connected with Owen Glendower. Amongst these is one in which he describes the Welsh chieftain's mansion at Sycharth, and his hospitable way of living at that his favorite residence; and another in which he hails the advent of the comet, which made its appearance in the month of March, fourteen hundred and two, as of good augury to his darling hero.

It was from knowing that this distinguished man lay buried in the precincts of the old edifice that I felt so anxious to see it. After walking about two miles we perceived it on our right hand.

The abbey of the vale of the cross stands in a green meadow, in a corner near the north-west end of the valley of Llangollen. The vale or glen, in which the abbey stands, takes its name from a certain ancient pillar or cross, called the pillar of Eliseg, and which is believed to have been raised over the body of an ancient British chieftain of that name, who perished in battle against the Saxons, about the middle of the

tenth century. In the Papist times the abbey was a place of great pseudo-sanctity, wealth and consequence. The territory belonging to it was very extensive, comprising, amongst other districts, the vale of Llangollen and the mountain region to the north of it, called the Eglwysig Rocks, which region derived its name Eglwysig, or ecclesiastical, from the circumstance of its pertaining to the abbey of the vale of the cross.

We first reached that part of the building which had once been the church, having previously to pass through a farm-yard, in which was abundance of dirt and mire.

The church fronts the west and contains the remains of a noble window, beneath which is a gate, which we found locked. Passing on we came to that part where the monks had lived, but which now served as a farm-house; an open doorway exhibited to us an ancient gloomy hall, where was some curious old-fashioned furniture, particularly an ancient rack, in which stood a goodly range of pewter trenchers. A respectable dame kindly welcomed us and invited us to

sit down. We entered into conversation with her, and asked her name, which she said was Evans. I spoke some Welsh to her, which pleased her. She said that Welsh people at the present day were so full of fine airs that they were above speaking the old language—but that such was not the case formerly, and that she had known a Mrs. Price, who was housekeeper to the Countess of Mornington, who lived in London upwards of forty years, and at the end of that time prided herself upon speaking as good Welsh as she did when a girl. I spoke to her about the abbey, and asked if she had ever heard of Iolo Goch. She inquired who he was. I told her he was a great bard, and was buried in the abbey. She said she had never heard of him, but that she could show me the portrait of a great poet, and going away, presently returned with a print in a frame.

"There," said she, "is the portrait of Twm o'r Nant, generally called the Welsh Shakespear."

I looked at it. The Welsh Shakespear was represented sitting at a table with a pen in his

hand; a cottage-latticed window was behind him, on his left hand; a shelf with plates, and trenchers behind him, on his right. His features were rude, but full of wild, strange expression; below the picture was the following couplet:—

Llun Gwr yw llawn gwir Awen;
Y Byd a lanwodd o'i Ben.

"Did you ever hear of Twm o'r Nant?" said the old dame.

"I never heard of him by word of mouth," said I; "but I know all about him—I have read his life in Welsh, written by himself, and a curious life it is. His name was Thomas Edwards, but he generally called himself Twm o'r Nant, or Tom of the Dingle, because he was born in a dingle, at a place called Pen Porchell in the vale of Clwyd—which, by the bye, was on the estate, which once belonged to Iolo Goch, the poet I was speaking to you about just now. Tom was a carter by trade, but once kept a toll-bar in South Wales, which, however, he was obliged to leave at the end of two years, owing to the annoyance which he experienced from

ghosts and goblins, and unearthly things, particularly phantom hearses, which used to pass through his gate at midnight without paying, when the gate was shut."

"Ah," said the Dame, "you know more about Tom o'r Nant than I do; and was he not a great poet?"

"I dare say he was," said I, "for the pieces which he wrote, and which he called Interludes, had a great run, and he got a great deal of money by them, but I should say the lines beneath the portrait are more applicable to the real Shakespear than to him."

"What do the lines mean?" said the old lady; "they are Welsh, I know, but they are far beyond my understanding."

"They may be thus translated," said I:

> God in his head the Muse instill'd,
> And from his head the world he fill'd.

"Thank you, sir," said the old lady—"I never found any one before who could translate them." She then said she would show me some English lines written on the daughter of a friend of hers who was lately dead, and put

some printed lines in a frame into my hand. They were an Elegy to Mary, and were very beautiful. I read them aloud and when I had finished she thanked me and said she had no doubt that if I pleased I could put them into Welsh—she then sighed and wiped her eyes.

On our enquiring whether we could see the interior of the abbey she said we could, and that if we rang a bell at the gate a woman would come to us, who was in the habit of showing the place. We then got up and bade her farewell—but she begged that we would stay and taste the dwr santaidd of the holy well.

"What holy well is that?" said I.

"A well," said she, "by the road's side, which in the time of the popes was said to perform wonderful cures."

"Let us taste it by all means," said I; whereupon she went out, and presently returned with a tray on which were a jug and tumbler, the jug filled with the water of the holy well; we drank some of the dwr santaidd which tasted like any other water, and then after shaking her

by the hand, we went to the gate, and rang at the bell.

Presently a woman made her appearance at the gate—she was genteelly drest, about the middle age, rather tall and bearing in her countenance the traces of beauty. When we told her the object of our coming she admitted us and after locking the gate conducted us into the church. It was roofless, and had nothing remarkable about it, save the western window, which we had seen from without. Our attendant pointed out to us some tombs, and told us the names of certain great people whose dust they contained. "Can you tell us where Iolo Goch lies interred?" said I.

"No," said she; "indeed I never heard of such a person."

"He was the bard of Owen Glendower," said I, "and assisted his cause wonderfully by the fiery odes, in which he incited the Welsh to rise against the English."

"Indeed!" said she; "well, I am sorry to say that I never heard of him."

"Are you Welsh?" said I.

"I am," she replied.

"Did you ever hear of Thomas Edwards?"

"O, yes," said she; "I have frequently heard of him."

"How odd," said I, "that the name of a great poet should be unknown in the very place where he is buried, whilst that of one certainly not his superior, should be well known in that same place, though he is not buried there."

"Perhaps," said she, "the reason is that the poet, whom you mentioned, wrote in the old measures and language which few people now understand, whilst Thomas Edwards wrote in common verse and in the language of the present day."

"I dare say it is so," said I.

From the church she led us to other parts of the ruin—at first she had spoken to us rather cross and loftily, but she now became kind and communicative. She said that she resided near the ruins, which she was permitted to show, that she lived alone, and wished to be alone—there was something singular about her, and I believe that she had a history of her own.

After showing us the ruins she conducted us to a cottage in which she lived; it stood behind the ruins by a fish-pond, in a beautiful and romantic place enough—she said that in the winter she went away, but to what place she did not say. She asked us whether we came walking, and on our telling her that we did, she said that she would point out to us a near way home. She then pointed to a path up a hill, telling us we must follow it. After making her a present we bade her farewell, and passing through a meadow crossed a brook by a rustic bridge, formed of the stem of a tree, and ascending the hill by the path which she had pointed out, we went through a corn field or two on its top, and at last found ourselves on the Llangollen road, after a most beautiful walk.

CHAPTER XIV.

EXPEDITION TO RUTHYN.—THE COLUMN.—SLATE QUARRIES.—THE GWYDDELOD.—NOCTURNAL ADVENTURE.

NOTHING worthy of commemoration took place during the two following days, save that myself and family took an evening walk on the Wednesday up the side of the Berwyn, for the purpose of botanizing, in which we were attended by John Jones. There, amongst other plants, we found a curious moss which our good friend said was called in Welsh Corn Carw, or deer's horn, and which he said the deer were very fond of. On the Thursday he and I started on an expedition on foot to Ruthyn, distant about fourteen miles, proposing to return in the evening.

The town and castle of Ruthyn possessed great interest for me from being connected with

the affairs of Owen Glendower. It was at Ruthyn that the first and not the least remarkable scene of the Welsh insurrection took place by Owen making his appearance at the fair held there in fourteen hundred, plundering the English who had come with their goods, slaying many of them, sacking the town and concluding his day's work by firing it; and it was at the castle of Ruthyn that Lord Grey dwelt, a minion of Henry the Fourth and Glendower's deadliest enemy, and who was the principal cause of the chieftain's entering into rebellion, having in the hope of obtaining his estates in the vale of Clwyd poisoned the mind of Henry against him, who proclaimed him a traitor, before he had committed any act of treason, and confiscated his estates, bestowing that part of them upon his favorite, which the latter was desirous of obtaining.

We started on our expedition at about seven o'clock of a brilliant morning. We passed by the abbey and presently came to a small fountain with a little stone edifice, with a sharp top above it. "That is the holy well," said my guide:

"Llawer iawn o barch yn yr amser yr Pabyddion yr oedd i'r fynnon hwn—much respect in the times of the Papists there was to this fountain."

"I heard of it," said I, "and tasted of its water the other evening at the abbey:" shortly after we saw a tall stone standing in a field on our right hand at about a hundred yards' distance from the road. "That is the pillar of Eliseg, sir," said my guide. "Let us go and see it," said I. We soon reached the stone. It is a fine upright column about seven feet high, and stands on a quadrate base. "Sir," said my guide, "a dead king lies buried beneath this stone. He was a mighty man of valour and founded the abbey. He was called Eliseg." "Perhaps Ellis," said I, "and if his name was Ellis his stone was very properly called Colofn Eliseg, in Saxon the Ellisian column." The view from the column is very beautiful, below on the south-east is the venerable abbey, slumbering in its green meadow. Beyond it runs a stream, descending from the top of a glen, at the bottom of which the old pile is situated; beyond the stream is a lofty

hill. The glen on the north is bounded by a noble mountain, covered with wood. Struck with its beauty I inquired its name. "Moel Eglwysig, sir," said my guide. "The Moel of the Church," said I. "That is hardly a good name for it, for the hill is not bald (moel)." "True, sir," said John Jones. "At present its name is good for nothing, but estalom (of old) before the hill was planted with trees its name was good enough. Our fathers were not fools when they named their hills." "I dare say not," said I, "nor in many other things which they did, for which we laugh at them, because we do not know the reasons they had for doing them." We regained the road; the road tended to the north up a steep ascent. I asked John Jones the name of a beautiful village, which lay far away on our right, over the glen, and near its top. "Pentref y dwr, sir" (the village of the water). It is called the village of the water, because the river below comes down through part of it. I next asked the name of the hill up which we were going, and he told me Allt Bwlch; that is, the high place of the hollow road.

This bwlch, or hollow way, was a regular pass, which put me wonderfully in mind of the passes of Spain. It took us a long time to get to the top. After resting a minute on the summit we began to descend. My guide pointed out to me some slate-works, at some distance on our left. "There is a great deal of work going on there, sir," said he: "all the slates that you see descending the canal at Llangollen come from there." The next moment we heard a blast, and then a thundering sound: "Llais craig yn syrthiaw; the voice of the rock in falling, sir," said John Jones; "blasting is dangerous and awful work." We reached the bottom of the descent, and proceeded for two or three miles up and down a rough and narrow road; I then turned round and looked at the hills which we had passed over. They looked bulky and huge.

We continued our way, and presently saw marks of a fire in some grass by the side of the road. "Have the Gipsiaid been there?" said I to my guide.

"Hardly, sir; I should rather think that the

Gwyddeliad (Irish) have been camping there lately."

"The Gwyddeliad?"

"Yes, sir, the vagabond Gwyddeliad, who at present infest these parts much, and do much more harm than the Gipsiaid ever did."

"What do you mean by the Gipsiaid?"

"Dark, handsome people, sir, who occasionally used to come about in vans and carts, the men buying and selling horses, and sometimes tinkering, whilst the women told fortunes."

"And they have ceased to come about?"

"Nearly so, sir; I believe they have been frightened away by the Gwyddelod."

"What kind of people are these Gwyddelod?"

"Savage brutish people, sir; in general without shoes and stockings, with coarse features and heads of hair like mops."

"How do they live?"

"The men tinker a little, sir, but more frequently plunder. The women tell fortunes, and steal whenever they can."

"They live something like the Gipsiaid."

"Something, sir; but the hen Gipsiaid were gentlefolks in comparison."

"You think the Gipsiaid have been frightened away by the Gwyddelians?"

"I do, sir; the Gwyddelod made their appearance in these parts about twenty years ago, and since then the Gipsiaid have been rarely seen."

"Are these Gwyddelod poor?"

"By no means, sir; they make large sums by plundering and other means, with which, 'tis said, they retire at last to their own country or America, where they buy land and settle down."

"What language do they speak?"

"English, sir; they pride themselves on speaking good English, that is to the Welsh. Amongst themselves they discourse in their own Paddy Gwyddel."

"Have they no Welsh?"

"Only a few words, sir; I never heard of one of them speaking Welsh, save a young girl—she fell sick by the roadside, as she was wandering

by herself—some people at a farmhouse took her in, and tended her till she was well. During her sickness she took a fancy to their quiet way of life, and when she was recovered she begged to stay with them and serve them. They consented; she became a very good servant, and hearing nothing but Welsh spoken, soon picked up the tongue."

"Do you know what became of her?"

"I do, sir; her own people found her out, and wished to take her away with them, but she refused to let them, for by that time she was perfectly reclaimed, had been to chapel, renounced her heathen crefydd, and formed an acquaintance with a young Methodist who had a great gift of prayer, whom she afterwards married—she and her husband live at present not far from Mineira."

"I almost wonder that her own people did not kill her."

"They threatened to do so, sir, and would doubtless have put their threat into execution, had they not been prevented by the Man on High."

And here my guide pointed with his finger reverently upward.

"Is it a long time since you have seen any of these Gwyddeliaid?"

"About two months, sir, and then a terrible fright they caused me."

"How was that?"

"I will tell you, sir; I had been across the Berwyn to carry home a piece of weaving work to a person who employs me. It was night as I returned, and when I was about half-way down the hill, at a place which is called Allt Paddy, because the Gwyddelod are in the habit of taking up their quarters there, I came upon a gang of them, who had come there and camped and lighted their fire, whilst I was on the other side of the hill. There were nearly twenty of them, men and women, and amongst the rest was a man standing naked in a tub of water with two women stroking him down with clouts. He was a large fierce-looking fellow and his body, on which the flame of the fire glittered, was nearly covered with red hair. I never saw such a sight. As I passed they

glared at me and talked violently in their Paddy Gwyddel, but did not offer to molest me. I hastened down the hill, and right glad I was when I found myself safe and sound at my house in Llangollen, with my money in my pocket, for I had several shillings there, which the man across the hill had paid me for the work which I had done."

CHAPTER XV.

THE TURF TAVERN.—DON'T UNDERSTAND.—THE BEST WELSH.—THE MAIDS OF MERION.—OLD AND NEW.—RUTHYN.—THE ASH YGGDRASILL.

WE now emerged from the rough and narrow way which we had followed for some miles, upon one much wider, and more commodious, which my guide told me was the coach road from Wrexham to Ruthyn, and going on a little farther we came to an avenue of trees which shaded the road. It was chiefly composed of ash, sycamore and birch and looked delightfully cool and shady. I asked my guide if it belonged to any gentleman's house. He told me that it did not, but to a public-house, called Tafarn Tywarch, which stood near the end, a little way off the road. "Why is it called Tafarn Tywarch?" said I, struck by the name which signifies "the tavern of turf."

"It was called so, sir," said John, "because it was originally merely a turf hovel, though at present it consists of good brick and mortar."

"Can we breakfast there," said I, "for I feel both hungry and thirsty?"

"O, yes, sir," said John, "I have heard there is good cheese and cwrw there."

We turned off to the "tafarn," which was a decent public-house of rather an antiquated appearance. We entered a sanded kitchen, and sat down by a large oaken table. "Please to bring us some bread, cheese and ale," said I in Welsh to an elderly woman, who was moving about.

"Sar?" said she.

"Bring us some bread, cheese and ale," I repeated in Welsh.

"I do not understand you, sar," said she in English.

"Are you Welsh?" said I in English.

"Yes, I am Welsh!"

"And can you speak Welsh?"

"O, yes, and the best."

"Then why did you not bring what I asked for?"

"Because I did not understand you."

"Tell her," said I to John Jones, "to bring us some bread, cheese and ale."

"Come, aunt," said John, "bring us bread and cheese and a quart of the best ale."

The woman looked as if she was going to reply in the tongue in which he addressed her, then faultered, and at last said in English, that she did not understand.

"Now," said I, "you are fairly caught: this man is a Welshman, and moreover understands no language but Welsh."

"Then how can he understand you?" said she.

"Because I speak Welsh," said I.

"Then you are a Welshman?" said she.

"No I am not," said I, "I am English."

"So I thought," said she, "and on that account I could not understand you."

"You mean that you would not," said I. "Now do you choose to bring what you are bidden?"

"Come, aunt," said John, "don't be silly and cenfigenus, but bring the breakfast."

The woman stood still for a moment or two, and then biting her lips went away.

"What made the woman behave in this manner?" said I to my companion.

"O she was cenfigenus, sir," he replied; "she did not like that an English gentleman should understand Welsh; she was envious; you will find a dozen or two like her in Wales; but let us hope not more."

Presently the woman returned with the bread, cheese and ale, which she placed on the table.

"Oh," said I, "you have brought what was bidden, though it was never mentioned to you in English, which shows that your pretending not to understand was all a sham. What made you behave so?"

"Why I thought," said the woman, "that no Englishman could speak Welsh, that his tongue was too short."

"Your having thought so," said I, "should not have made you tell a falsehood, saying that

you did not understand, when you knew that you understood very well. See what a disgraceful figure you cut."

"I cut no disgraced figure," said the woman: "after all, what right have the English to come here speaking Welsh, which belongs to the Welsh alone, who in fact are the only people that understand it."

"Are you sure that you understand Welsh?" said I.

"I should think so," said the woman, "for I come from the Vale of Clwyd, where they speak the best Welsh in the world, the Welsh of the Bible."

"What do they call a salmon in the Vale of Clywd?" said I.

"What do they call a salmon?" said the woman.

"Yes," said I, "when they speak Welsh."

"They call it—they call it—why a salmon."

"Pretty Welsh!" said I. "I thought you did not understand Welsh."

"Well, what do you call it?" said the woman.

"Eawg," said I, "that is the word for a salmon in general—but there are words also to show the sex—when you speak of a male salmon you should say cemyw, when of a female hwyfell."

"I never heard the words before," said the woman, "nor do I believe them to be Welsh."

"You say so," said I, "because you do not understand Welsh."

"I not understand Welsh!" said she. "I'll soon show you that I do. Come, you have asked me the word for salmon, in Welsh, I will now ask you the word for salmon-trout. Now tell me that, and I will say you know something of the matter."

A tinker of my country can tell you that," said I. "The word for salmon-trout is gleisiad."

The countenance of the woman fell.

"I see you know something about the matter," said she; "there are very few hereabouts, though so near to the Vale of Clwyd, who know the word for salmon-trout in Welsh,

I shouldn't have known the word myself, but for the song which says :

Glân yw 'r gleisiad yn y llyn."

"And who wrote that song?" said I.

"I don't know," said the woman.

"But I do," said I; "one Lewis Morris wrote it."

"Oh," said she, "I have heard all about Huw Morris."

"I was not talking of Huw Morris," said I, "but Lewis Morris, who lived long after Huw Morris. He was a native of Anglesea, but resided for some time in Merionethshire, and whilst there composed a song about the Morwynion bro Meirionydd or the lasses of County Merion of a great many stanzas, in one of which the gleisiad is mentioned. Here it is in English.

Full fair the gleisiad in the flood,
Which sparkles 'neath the summer's sun,
And fair the thrush in green abode
Spreading his wings in sportive fun,
But fairer look if truth be spoke,
The maids of County Merion."

The woman was about to reply, but I interrupted her.

"There," said I, "pray leave us to our breakfast, and the next time you feel inclined to talk nonsense about no Englishman's understanding Welsh, or knowing anything of Welsh matters, remember that it was an Englishman who told you the Welsh word for salmon, and likewise the name of the Welshman who wrote the song in which the gleisiad is mentioned."

The ale was very good and so were the bread and cheese. The ale indeed was so good that I ordered a second jug. Observing a large antique portrait over the mantel-piece I got up to examine it. It was that of a gentleman in a long wig, and underneath it was painted in red letters "Sir Watkin Wynn 1742." It was doubtless the portrait of the Sir Watkin who in 1745 was committed to the Tower under suspicion of being suspected of holding Jacobite opinions, and favouring the Pretender. The portrait was a very poor daub, but I looked at it long and attentively as a memorial of Wales at a critical and long past time.

When we had dispatched the second jug of ale, and I had paid the reckoning, we departed

and soon came to where stood a turnpike house at a junction of two roads, to each of which was a gate.

"Now, sir," said John Jones, "the way straight forward is the ffordd newydd and the one on our right hand is the hen ffordd. Which shall we follow, the new or the old?"

"There is a proverb in the Gerniweg," said I, "which was the language of my forefathers, saying 'ne'er leave the old way for the new,' we will therefore go by the hen ffordd."

"Very good, sir," said my guide, "that is the path I always go, for it is the shortest." So we turned to the right and followed the old road. Perhaps, however, it would have been well had we gone by the new, for the hen ffordd was a very dull and uninteresting road, whereas the ffordd newydd, as I long subsequently found, is one of the grandest passes in Wales. After we had walked a short distance my guide said, "Now, sir, if you will turn a little way to the left hand I will show you a house built in the old style, such a house, sir, as I dare say the original turf tavern was." Then leading me a little way

from the road he showed me, under a hollow bank, a small cottage covered with flags.

"That is a house, sir, built yn yr hen dull in the old fashion, of earth, flags and wattles and in one night. It was the custom of old when a house was to be built, for the people to assemble, and to build it in one night of common materials, close at hand. The custom is not quite dead. I was at the building of this myself, and a merry building it was. The cwrw da passed quickly about among the builders, I assure you." We returned to the road, and when we had ascended a hill my companion told me that if I looked to the left I should see the vale of Clwyd.

I looked and perceived an extensive valley pleasantly dotted with trees and farm-houses, and bounded on the west by a range of hills.

"It is a fine valley, sir," said my guide, "four miles wide and twenty long, and contains the richest land in all Wales. Cheese made in that valley, sir, fetches a penny a pound more than cheese made in any other valley."

"And who owns it?" said I.

"Various are the people who own it, sir, but Sir Watkin owns the greater part."

We went on, passed by a village called Craig Vychan where we saw a number of women washing at a fountain, and by a gentle descent soon reached the vale of Clwyd.

After walking about a mile we left the road and proceeded by a footpath across some meadows. The meadows were green and delightful and were intersected by a beautiful stream. Trees in abundance were growing about, some of which were oaks. We passed by a little white chapel with a small graveyard before it, which my guide told me belonged to the Baptists, and shortly afterwards reached Ruthyn.

We went to an inn called the Crossed Foxes, where we refreshed ourselves with ale. We then sallied forth to look about, after I had ordered a duck to be got ready for dinner, at three o'clock. Ruthyn stands on a hill above the Clwyd, which in the summer is a mere brook, but in the winter a considerable stream, being then fed with the watery tribute of a hundred hills. About three miles to the north

is a range of lofty mountains, dividing the shire of Denbigh from that of Flint, amongst which, almost parallel with the town, and lifting its head high above the rest, is the mighty Moel Vamagh, the mother heap, which I had seen from Chester. Ruthyn is a dull town, but it possessed plenty of interest for me, for as I strolled with my guide about the streets I remembered that I was treading the ground, which the wild bands of Glendower had trod, and where the great struggle commenced, which for fourteen years convulsed Wales, and for some time shook England to its centre. After I had satisfied myself with wandering about the town we proceeded to the castle.

The original castle suffered terribly in the civil wars; it was held for wretched Charles, and was nearly demolished by the cannon of Cromwell, which were planted on a hill about half a mile distant. The present castle is partly modern and partly ancient. It belongs to a family of the name of W—— who reside in the modern part, and who have the character of being kind, hospitable and intellectual people.

We only visited the ancient part, over which we were shown by a woman, who hearing us speaking Welsh, spoke Welsh herself during the whole time she was showing us about. She showed us dark passages, a gloomy apartment in which Welsh kings and great people had been occasionally confined, that strange memorial of the good old times, a drowning pit, and a large prison room, in the middle of which stood a singular-looking column, scrawled with odd characters, which had of yore been used for a whipping-post, another memorial of the good old baronial times, so dear to romance readers and minds of sensibility. Amongst other things, which our conductor showed us, was an immense onen or ash; it stood in one of the courts and measured, as she said, pedwar y haner o ladd yn ei gwmpas, or four yards and a half in girth. As I gazed on the mighty tree I thought of the Ash Yggdrasill mentioned in the Voluspa, or prophecy of Vola, that venerable poem which contains so much relating to the mythology of the ancient Norse.

We returned to the inn and dined. The

duck was capital, and I asked John Jones if he had ever tasted a better. "Never, sir," said he, "for to tell you the truth, I never tasted a duck before." "Rather singular," said I. "What that I should not have tasted duck? O, sir, the singularity is, that I should now be tasting duck. Duck in Wales, sir, is not fare for poor weavers. This is the first duck I ever tasted, and though I never taste another, as I probably never shall, I may consider myself a fortunate weaver, for I can now say I have tasted duck once in my life. Few weavers in Wales are ever able to say as much."

CHAPTER XVI.

BAPTIST TOMB-STONE.—THE TOLL-BAR.—REBECCA.—THE GUITAR.

THE sun was fast declining as we left Ruthyn. We retraced our steps across the fields. When we came to the Baptist chapel, I got over the wall of the little yard to look at the grave-stones. There were only three. The inscriptions upon them were all in Welsh. The following stanza was on the stone of Jane, the daughter of Elizabeth Williams, who died on the second of May, 1843:

Er myn'd i'r oerllyd annedd
Dros dymher hir i orwedd,
Cwyd i'r lan o'r gwely bridd
Ac hyfryd fydd ei hagwedd.

which is

Though thou art gone to dwelling cold
To lie in mould for many a year,
Thou shalt, at length, from earthy bed,
Uplift thy head to blissful sphere.

As we went along I stopped to gaze at a singular-looking hill forming part of the mountain range on the east. I asked John Jones what its name was, but he did not know. As we were standing talking about it, a lady came up from the direction in which our course lay. John Jones touching his hat to her, said :

"Madam, this gwr boneddig wishes to know the name of that moel, perhaps you can tell him."

"Its name is Moel Agrik," said the lady, addressing me in English.

"Does that mean Agricola's hill?" said I.

"It does," said she, "and there is a tradition that the Roman general Agricola, when he invaded these parts, pitched his camp on that moel. The hill is spoken of by Pennant."

"Thank you, madam," said I; "perhaps you can tell me the name of the delightful grounds in which we stand, supposing they have a name."

"They are called Oaklands," said the lady.

"A very proper name," said I, "for there

is plenty of oaks growing about. But why are they called by a Saxon name, for Oaklands is Saxon."

"Because," said the lady, "when the grounds were first planted with trees they belonged to an English family."

"Thank you," said I, and, taking off my hat, I departed with my guide. I asked him her name, but he could not tell me. Before she was out of sight, however, we met a labourer of whom John Jones enquired her name.

"Her name is W——s," said the man, "and a good lady she is."

"Is she Welsh?" said I.

"Pure Welsh, master," said the man. "Purer Welsh flesh and blood need not be."

Nothing farther worth relating occurred till we reached the toll-bar at the head of the hen ffordd, by which time the sun was almost gone down. We found the master of the gate, his wife and son seated on a bench before the door. The woman had a large book on her lap, in which she was reading by the last light of the departing orb. I gave the group the sele of the

evening in English, which they all returned, the woman looking up from her book.

"Is that volume the Bible?" said I.

"It is, sir," said the woman.

"May I look at it?" said I.

"Certainly," said the woman, and placed the book in my hand. It was a magnificent Welsh Bible, but without the title-page.

"That book must be a great comfort to you," said I to her.

"Very great," said she. "I know not what we should do without it in the long winter evenings."

"Of what faith are you?" said I.

"We are Methodists," she replied.

"Then you are of the same faith as my friend here," said I.

"Yes, yes," said she, "we are aware of that. We all know honest John Jones."

After we had left the gate I asked John Jones whether he had ever heard of Rebecca of the toll-gates.

"O, yes," said he; "I have heard of that chieftainess."

"And who was she?" said I.

"I cannot say, sir; I never saw her, nor any one who had seen her. Some say that there were a hundred Rebeccas, and all of them men dressed in women's clothes, who went about at night, at the head of bands to break the gates. Ah, sir, something of the kind was almost necessary at that time. I am a friend of peace, sir, no head-breaker, house-breaker, nor gate-breaker, but I can hardly blame what was done at that time, under the name of Rebecca. You have no idea how the poor Welsh were oppressed by those gates, aye, and the rich too. The little people and farmers could not carry their produce to market owing to the exactions at the gates, which devoured all the profit and sometimes more. So that the markets were not half supplied, and people with money could frequently not get what they wanted. Complaints were made to government, which not being attended to, Rebecca and her byddinion made their appearance at night, and broke the gates to pieces with sledge-hammers, and everybody said it was gallant work, everybody save the

keepers of the gates and the proprietors. Not only the poor but the rich, said so. Aye, and I have heard that many a fine young gentleman had a hand in the work, and went about at night at the head of a band dressed as Rebecca. Well, sir, those breakings were acts of violence, I don't deny, but they did good, for the system is altered; such impositions are no longer practised at gates as were before the time of Rebecca."

"Were any people ever taken up and punished for those nocturnal breakings?" said I.

"No, sir; and I have heard say that nobody's being taken up was a proof that the rich approved of the work and had a hand in it."

Night had come on by the time we reached the foot of the huge hills we had crossed in the morning. We toiled up the ascent, and after crossing the level ground on the top, plunged down the bwlch between walking and running, occasionally stumbling, for we were nearly in complete darkness, and the bwlch was steep and stony. We more than once passed people who gave us the n's da, the hissing night saluta-

tion of the Welsh. At length I saw the abbey looming amidst the darkness, and John Jones said that we were just above the fountain. We descended and putting my head down I drank greedily of the dwr santaidd, my guide following my example. We then proceeded on our way, and in about half-an-hour reached Llangollen. I took John Jones home with me. We had a cheerful cup of tea. Henrietta played on the guitar, and sang a Spanish song, to the great delight of John Jones, who at about ten o'clock departed contented and happy to his own dwelling.

CHAPTER XVII.

JOHN JONES AND HIS BUNDLE.—A GOOD LADY.—THE IRISHMAN'S DINGLE.—AB GWILYM AND THE MIST.—THE KITCHEN.—THE TWO INDIVIDUALS.—THE HORSE-DEALER.—I CAN MANAGE HIM.—THE MIST AGAIN.

THE following day was gloomy. In the evening John Jones made his appearance with a bundle under his arm, and an umbrella in his hand.

"Sir," said he, "I am going across the mountain with a piece of weaving work, for the man on the other side, who employs me. Perhaps you would like to go with me, as you are fond of walking."

"I suppose," said I, "you wish to have my company for fear of meeting Gwyddelians on the hill."

John smiled.

"Well, sir," said he, "if I do meet them I would sooner be with company than without.

But I dare venture by myself, trusting in the Man on High, and perhaps I do wrong to ask you to go, as you must be tired with your walk of yesterday."

"Hardly more than yourself," said I. "Come; I shall be glad to go. What I said about the Gwyddelians was only in jest."

As we were about to depart John said,

"It does not rain at present, sir, but I think it will. You had better take an umbrella."

I did so, and away we went. We passed over the bridge, and turning to the right went by the back of the town through a field. As we passed by the Plas Newydd John Jones said:

"No one lives there now, sir; all dark and dreary; very different from the state of things when the ladies lived there—all gay then and cheerful. I remember the ladies, sir, particularly the last, who lived by herself after her companion died. She was a good lady, and very kind to the poor; when they came to her gate they were never sent away without something to cheer them. She was a grand lady too—

kept grand company, and used to be drawn about in a coach by four horses. But she too is gone, and the house is cold and empty; no fire in it, sir; no furniture. There was an auction after her death; and a grand auction it was and lasted four days. O, what a throng of people there was, some of whom came from a great distance, to buy the curious things, of which there were plenty."

We passed over a bridge, which crosses a torrent, which descends from the mountain on the south side of Llangollen, which bridge John Jones told me was called the bridge of the Melin Bac, or mill of the nook, from a mill of that name close by. Continuing our way we came to a glen, down which the torrent comes which passes under the bridge. There was little water in the bed of the torrent, and we crossed easily enough by stepping-stones. I looked up the glen; a wild place enough, its sides overgrown with trees. Dreary and dismal it looked in the gloom of the closing evening. John Jones said that there was no regular path up it, and that one could only get along by

jumping from stone to stone, at the hazard of breaking one's legs. Having passed over the bed of the torrent, we came to a path, which led up the mountain. The path was very steep and stony; the glen with its trees and darkness on our right. We proceeded some way. At length John Jones pointed to a hollow lane on our right, seemingly leading into the glen.

"That place, sir," said he, "is called Pant y Gwyddel—the Irishman's dingle, and sometimes Pant Paddy, from the Irish being fond of taking up their quarters there. It was just here, at the entrance of the pant, that the tribe were encamped, when I passed two months ago at night, in returning from the other side of the hill with ten shillings in my pocket, which I had been paid for a piece of my work, which I had carried over the mountain to the very place where I am now carrying this. I shall never forget the fright I was in, both on account of my life, and my ten shillings. I ran down what remained of the hill as fast as I could, not minding the stones. Should I meet a tribe now on my return I shall not run; you will be with

me, and I shall not fear for my life nor for my money, which will be now more than ten shillings, provided the man over the hills pays me, as I have no doubt he will."

As we ascended higher we gradually diverged from the glen, though we did not lose sight of it till we reached the top of the mountain. The top was nearly level. On our right were a few fields enclosed with stone walls. On our left was an open space where whin, furze and heath were growing. We passed over the summit, and began to descend by a tolerably good, though steep road. But for the darkness of evening and a drizzling mist, which, for some time past, had been coming on, we should have enjoyed a glorious prospect down into the valley, or perhaps I should say that I should have enjoyed a glorious prospect, for John Jones, like a true mountaineer, cared not a brass farthing for prospects. Even as it was, noble glimpses of wood and rock were occasionally to be obtained. The mist soon wetted us to the skin notwithstanding that we put up our umbrellas. It was a regular Welsh mist, a niwl, like that

in which the great poet Ab Gwilym lost his way, whilst trying to keep an assignation with his beloved Morfydd, and which he abuses in the following manner:—

O ho! thou villain mist, O ho!
What plea hast thou to plague me so?
I scarcely know a scurril name,
But dearly thou deserv'st the same;
Thou exhalation from the deep
Unknown, where ugly spirits keep!
Thou smoke from hellish stews uphurl'd
To mock and mortify the world!
Thou spider-web of giant race,
Spun out and spread through airy space!
Avaunt, thou filthy, clammy thing,
Of sorry rain the source and spring!
Moist blanket dripping misery down,
Loathed alike by land and town!
Thou watery monster, wan to see,
Intruding 'twixt the sun and me,
To rob me of my blessed right,
To turn my day to dismal night.
Parent of thieves and patron best,
They brave pursuit within thy breast!
Mostly from thee its merciless snow
Grim January doth glean, I trow.
Pass off with speed, thou prowler pale,
Holding along o'er hill and dale,
Spilling a noxious spittle round,
Spoiling the fairies' sporting ground!
Move off to hell, mysterious haze;
Wherein deceitful meteors blaze;
Thou wild of vapour, vast, o'ergrown,
Huge as the ocean of unknown.

As we descended the path became more steep;

it was particularly so at a part where it was overshadowed with trees on both sides. Here finding walking very uncomfortable, my knees suffering much, I determined to run. So shouting to John Jones, "Nis gallav gerdded rhaid rhedeg," I set off running down the pass. My companion followed close behind, and luckily meeting no mischance, we presently found ourselves on level ground, amongst a collection of small houses. On our turning a corner a church appeared on our left hand on the slope of the hill. In the churchyard, and close to the road, grew a large yew-tree which flung its boughs far on every side. John Jones stopping by the tree said, that if I looked over the wall of the yard I should see the tomb of a Lord Dungannon, who had been a great benefactor to the village. I looked, and through the lower branches of the yew, which hung over part of the churchyard, I saw what appeared to be a mausoleum. Jones told me that in the church also there was the tomb of a great person of the name of Tyrwhitt.

We passed on by various houses till we came

nearly to the bottom of the valley. Jones then pointing to a large house, at a little distance on the right, told me that it was a good gwesty, and advised me to go and refresh myself in it, whilst he went and carried home his work to the man who employed him, who he said lived in a farm-house a few hundred yards off. I asked him where we were.

"At Llyn Ceiriog," he replied.

I then asked if we were near Pont Fadog; and received for answer that Pont Fadog was a good way down the valley, to the north-east, and that we could not see it owing to a hill which intervened.

Jones went his way and I proceeded to the gwestfa, the door of which stood invitingly open. I entered a large kitchen, at one end of which a good fire was burning in a grate, in front of which was a long table, and a high settle on either side. Everything looked very comfortable. There was nobody in the kitchen: on my calling, however, a girl came whom I bade in Welsh to bring me a pint of the best ale. The girl stared, but went away apparently to fetch

it—presently came the landlady, a good-looking middle-aged woman. I saluted her in Welsh and then asked her if she could speak English. She replied "Tipyn bach," which interpreted, is, a little bit. I soon, however, found that she could speak it very passably, for two men coming in from the rear of the house she conversed with them in English. These two individuals seated themselves on chairs near the door, and called for beer. The girl brought in the ale, and I sat down by the fire, poured myself out a glass, and made myself comfortable. Presently a gig drove up to the door, and in came a couple of dogs, one a tall black greyhound, the other a large female setter, the coat of the latter dripping with rain, and shortly after two men from the gig entered, one who appeared to be the principal was a stout bluff-looking person between fifty and sixty dressed in a grey stuff coat and with a slouched hat on his head. This man bustled much about, and in a broad Yorkshire dialect ordered a fire to be lighted in another room, and a chamber to be prepared for him and his companion; the landlady,

who appeared to know him, and to treat him with a kind of deference, asked if she should prepare two beds; whereupon he answered "No! As we came together, and shall start together, so shall we sleep together; it will not be for the first time."

His companion was a small mean-looking man dressed in a black coat, and behaved to him with no little respect. Not only the landlady but the two men, of whom I have previously spoken, appeared to know him and to treat him with deference. He and his companion presently went out to see after the horse. After a little time they returned, and the stout man called lustily for two fourpenny-worths of brandy and water—"Take it into the other room!" said he, and went into a side room with his companion, but almost immediately came out saying that the room smoked and was cold, and that he preferred sitting in the kitchen. He then took his seat near me, and when the brandy was brought drank to my health. I said thank you: but nothing farther.

He then began talking to the men and his companion upon indifferent subjects. After a little time John Jones came in, called for a glass of ale, and at my invitation seated himself between me and the stout personage. The latter addressed him roughly in English, but receiving no answer said, "Ah, you no understand. You have no English and I no Welsh."

"You have not mastered Welsh yet Mr. ——" said one of the men to him.

"No!" said he: "I have been doing business with the Welsh forty years, but can't speak a word of their language. I sometime guess at a word, spoken in the course of business, but am never sure."

Presently John Jones began talking to me, saying that he had been to the river, that the water was very low, and that there was little but stones in the bed of the stream.

I told him if its name was Ceiriog no wonder there were plenty of stones in it, Ceiriog being derived from Cerrig, a rock. The men stared to hear me speak Welsh.

"Is the gentleman a Welshman?" said one of the men, near the door, to his companion; "he seems to speak Welsh very well."

"How should I know?" said the other, who appeared to be a low working man.

"Who are those people?" said I to John Jones.

"The smaller man is a workman at a flannel manufactory," said Jones. "The other I do not exactly know."

"And who is the man on the other side of you?" said I.

"I believe he is an English dealer in gigs and horses," replied Jones, "and that he is come here either to buy or sell."

The man, however, soon put me out of all doubt with respect to his profession.

"I was at Chirk," said he; "and Mr. So-and-so asked me to have a look at his new gig and horse, and have a ride. I consented. They were both brought out—everything new: gig new, harness new, and horse new. Mr. So-and-so asked me what I thought of his turn-out. I gave a look and said, 'I like the car very well,

harness very well, but I don't like the horse at all: a regular bolter rearer and kicker, or I'm no judge; moreover, he's pigeon-toed.' However, we all got on the car—four of us, and I was of course complimented with the ribbons. Well, we hadn't gone fifty yards before the horse, to make my words partly good, began to kick like a new 'un. However, I managed him, and he went on for a couple of miles till we got to the top of the hill, just above the descent with the precipice on the right hand. Here he began to rear like a very devil.

"'O dear me!' says Mr. So-and-so; 'let me get out!'

"'Keep where you are,' says I, 'I can manage him.'

"However, Mr. So-and-so would not be ruled, and got out; coming down, not on his legs, but his hands and knees. And then the two others said—

"'Let us get out!'

"'Keep where you are,' said I, 'I can manage him.'

"But they must needs get out, or rather tum-

ble out, for they both came down on the road hard on their backs.

"'Get out yourself,' said they all, 'and let the devil go, or you are a done man.'

"'Getting out may do for you young hands,' says I, 'but it won't do for I; neither my back nor bones will stand the hard road.'

"Mr. So-and-so ran to the horse's head.

"'Are you mad?' says I, 'if you try to hold him he'll be over the pree-si-pice in a twinkling, and then where am I? Give him head; I can manage him.'

"So Mr. So-and-so got out of the way, and down flew the horse right down the descent, as fast as he could gallop. I tell you what, I didn't half like it! A pree-si-pice on my right, the rock on my left, and a devil before me, going, like a cannon-ball, right down the hill. However, I contrived, as I said I would, to manage him; kept the car from the rock and from the edge of the gulf too. Well, just when we had come to the bottom of the hill out comes the people running from the inn, almost covering the road.

"'Now get out of the way,' I shouts, 'if you don't wish to see your brains knocked out, and what would be worse, mine too.'

"So they gets out of the way, and on I spun, I and my devil. But by this time I had nearly taken the devil out of him. Well, he hadn't gone fifty yards on the level ground, when, what do you think he did? why, went regularly over, tumbled down regularly on the road, even as I knew he would some time or other, because why? he was pigeon-toed. Well, I gets out of the gig, and no sooner did Mr. So-and-so come up than I says—

"'I likes your car very well, and I likes your harness, but —— me if I likes your horse, and it will be some time before you persuade me to drive him again.'"

I am a great lover of horses, and an admirer of good driving, and should have wished to have some conversation with this worthy person about horses and their management. I should also have wished to ask him some questions about Wales and the Welsh, as he must have picked up a great deal of curious information

about both in his forty years' traffic, notwithstanding he did not know a word of Welsh, but John Jones prevented my farther tarrying by saying, that it would be as well to get over the mountain before it was entirely dark. So I got up, paid for my ale, vainly endeavoured to pay for that of my companion who insisted upon paying for what he had ordered, made a general bow and departed from the house, leaving the horse-dealer and the rest staring at each other and wondering who we were, or at least who I was. We were about to ascend the hill when John Jones asked me whether I should not like to see the bridge and the river. I told him I should. The bridge and the river presented nothing remarkable. The former was of a single arch; and the latter anything but abundant in its flow.

We now began to retrace our steps over the mountain. At first the mist appeared to be nearly cleared away. As we proceeded, however, large sheets began to roll up the mountain sides, and by the time we reached the summit we were completely shrouded in vapour. The

night, however, was not very dark, and we found our way tolerably well, though once in descending I had nearly tumbled into the nant or dingle, now on our left hand. The bushes and trees, seen indistinctly through the mist, had something the look of goblins, and brought to my mind the elves, which Ab Gwilym of old saw, or thought he saw, in a somewhat similar situation :—

> In every hollow dingle stood
> Of wry-mouth'd elves a wrathful brood.

Drenched to the skin, but uninjured in body and limb, we at length reached Llangollen.

CHAPTER XVIII.

VENERABLE OLD GENTLEMAN.—SURNAMES IN WALES.—RUSSIA AND BRITAIN.—CHURCH OF ENGLAND.—YRIARTE.—THE EAGLE AND HIS YOUNG.—POETS OF THE GAEL.—THE OXONIAN.—MASTER SALISBURIE.

My wife had told me that she had had some conversation upon the Welsh language and literature with a venerable old man, who kept a shop in the town, that she had informed him that I was very fond of both, and that he had expressed a great desire to see me. One afternoon I said: "Let us go and pay a visit to your old friend of the shop. I think from two or three things which you have told me about him, that he must be worth knowing." We set out. She conducted me across the bridge a little way; then presently turning to the left into the principal street, she entered the door of a shop on the left-hand side, over the top of which was

written: Jones; provision dealer and general merchant. The shop was small, with two little counters, one on each side. Behind one was a young woman, and behind the other a venerable-looking old man.

"I have brought my husband to visit you," said my wife, addressing herself to him.

"I am most happy to see him," said the old gentleman, making me a polite bow.

He then begged that we would do him the honour to walk into his parlour, and led us into a little back room, the window of which looked out upon the Dee a few yards below the bridge. On the left side of the room was a large case, well stored with books. He offered us chairs, and we all sat down. I was much struck with the old man. He was rather tall, and somewhat inclined to corpulency. His hair was grey; his forehead high; his nose aquiline; his eyes full of intelligence; whilst his manners were those of a perfect gentleman. I entered into conversation by saying that I supposed his name was Jones, as I had observed that name over the door.

"Jones is the name I bear at your service, sir," he replied.

I said that it was a very common name in Wales, as I knew several people who bore it, and observed that most of the surnames in Wales appeared to be modifications of Christian names; for example Jones, Roberts, Edwards, Humphreys, and likewise Pugh, Powel, and Probert, which were nothing more than the son of Hugh, the son of Howel, and the son of Robert. He said I was right, that there were very few real surnames in Wales; that the three great families, however, had real surnames; for that Wynn, Morgan and Bulkley were all real surnames. I asked him whether the Bulkleys of Anglesea were not originally an English family. He said they were, and that they settled down in Anglesea in the time of Elizabeth.

After some minutes my wife got up and left us. The old gentleman and I had then some discourse in Welsh; we soon, however, resumed speaking English. We got on the subject of Welsh bards, and after a good deal of discourse the old gentleman said:

"You seem to know something about Welsh poetry; can you tell me who wrote the following line?"

"'There will be great doings in Britain, and I shall have no concern in them."

"I will not be positive," said I, "but I think from its tone and tenor that it was composed by Merddyn, whom my countrymen call Merlin."

"I believe you are right," said the old gentleman, "I see you know something of Welsh poetry. I met the line, a long time ago, in a Welsh grammar. It then made a great impression upon me and of late it has always been ringing in my ears. I love Britain. Britain has just engaged in a war with a mighty country, and I am apprehensive of the consequences. I am old, upwards of four score, and shall probably not live to see the evil, if evil happens, as I fear it will—'There will be strange doings in Britain, but they will not concern me.' I cannot get the line out of my head."

I told him that the line probably related to the progress of the Saxons in Britain, but that

I did not wonder that it made an impression upon him at the present moment. I said, however, that we ran no risk from Russia; that the only power at all dangerous to Britain was France, which though at present leagued with her against Russia, would eventually go to war with and strive to subdue her, and then of course Britain could expect no help from Russia, her old friend and ally, who, if Britain had not outraged her, would have assisted her, in any quarrel or danger, with four or five hundred thousand men. I said that I hoped neither he nor I should see a French invasion, but I had no doubt one would eventually take place, and that then Britain must fight stoutly, as she had no one to expect help from but herself; that I wished she might be able to hold her own, but—

"Strange things will happen in Britain, though they will concern me nothing," said the old gentleman with a sigh.

On my expressing a desire to know something of his history, he told me that he was the son of a small farmer, who resided at some distance

from Llangollen; that he lost his father at an early age, and was obliged to work hard, even when a child, in order to assist his mother who had some difficulty, after the death of his father, in keeping things together; that though he was obliged to work hard he had been fond of study, and used to pore over Welsh and English books by the glimmering light of the turf fire at night, for that his mother could not afford to allow him anything in the shape of a candle to read by; that at his mother's death he left rural labour, and coming to Llangollen, commenced business in the little shop in which he was at present; that he had been married, and had children but that his wife and family were dead; that the young woman whom I had seen in the shop, and who took care of his house, was a relation of his wife; that though he had always been attentive to business, he had never abandoned study; that he had mastered his own language, of which he was passionately fond, and had acquired a good knowledge of English and of some other languages. That his fondness for literature had shortly after his arrival at Llangollen attracted

the notice of some of the people, who encouraged him in his studies, and assisted him by giving him books; that the two celebrated ladies of Llangollen had particularly noticed him; that he held the situation of church clerk for upwards of forty years, and that it was chiefly owing to the recommendation of the "great ladies" that he had obtained it. He then added with a sigh, that about ten years ago he was obliged to give it up, owing to something the matter with his eyesight, which prevented him from reading, and that his being obliged to give it up was a source of bitter grief to him, as he had always considered it a high honour to be permitted to assist in the service of the Church of England, in the principles of which he had been bred, and in whose doctrines he firmly believed.

Here shaking him by the hand I said that I too had been bred up in the principles of the Church of England; that I too firmly believed in its doctrines, and would maintain with my blood, if necessary, that there was not such another church in the world.

"So would I," said the old gentleman;

"where is there a church in whose liturgy there is so much Scripture as in that of the Church of England?"

"Pity," said I, "that so many traitors have lately sprung up in its ministry."

"If it be so," said the old church clerk, "they have not yet shown themselves in the pulpit at Llangollen. All the clergymen who have held the living in my time have been excellent. The present incumbent is a model of a Church-of-England clergyman. O, how I regret that the state of my eyes prevents me from officiating as clerk beneath him."

I told him that I should never from the appearance of his eyes have imagined that they were not excellent ones.

"I can see to walk about with them, and to distinguish objects," said the old gentleman; "but see to read with them I cannot. Even with the help of the most powerful glasses I cannot distinguish a letter. I believe I strained my eyes at a very early age, when striving to read at night by the glimmer of the turf fire in my poor mother's chimney corner. O what an

affliction is this state of my eyes! I can't turn my books to any account, nor read the newspapers; but I repeat that I chiefly lament it because it prevents me from officiating as under-preacher."

He showed me his books. Seeing amongst them "The Fables of Yriarte" in Spanish I asked how they came into his possession.

"They were presented to me," said he, "by one of the ladies of Llangollen, Lady Eleanor Butler."

"Have you ever read them?" said I.

"No," he replied; "I do not understand a word of Spanish; but I suppose her ladyship, knowing I was fond of languages, thought that I might one day set about learning Spanish and that then they might be useful to me."

He then asked me if I knew Spanish, and on my telling him that I had some knowledge of that language he asked me to translate some of the fables. I translated two of them, which pleased him much.

I then asked if he had ever heard of a collection of Welsh fables compiled about the year

thirteen hundred. He said that he had not, and inquired whether they had ever been printed. I told him that some had appeared in the old Welsh magazine called "The Greal."

"I wish you would repeat one of them," said the old clerk.

"Here is one," said I, "which particularly struck me:—

"It is the custom of the eagle, when his young are sufficiently old, to raise them up above his nest in the direction of the sun; and the bird which has strength enough of eye to look right in the direction of the sun, he keeps and nourishes, but the one which has not, he casts down into the gulf to its destruction. So does the Lord deal with His children in the Catholic Church Militant: those whom He sees worthy to serve Him in godliness and spiritual goodness He keeps with Him and nourishes, but those who are not worthy from being addicted to earthly things He casts out into utter darkness, where there is weeping and gnashing of teeth."

The old gentleman after a moment's reflection said it was a clever fable, but an unpleasant

one. It was hard for poor birds to be flung into a gulf for not having power of eye sufficient to look full in the face of the sun, and likewise hard that poor human creatures should be lost for ever, for not doing that which they had no power to do.

"Perhaps," said I, "the eagle does not deal with his chicks, or the Lord with His creatures as the fable represents."

"Let us hope at any rate," said the old gentleman, "that the Lord does not."

"Have you ever seen this book?" said he, and put Smith's "Sean Dana" into my hand.

"O yes," said I, "and have gone through it. It contains poems in the Gaelic language by Oisin and others, collected in the Highlands. I went through it a long time ago with great attention. Some of the poems are wonderfully beautiful."

"They are so," said the old clerk. "I too have gone through the book; it was presented to me a great many years ago by a lady to whom I gave some lessons in the Welsh language. I went through it with the assistance

of a Gaelic grammar and dictionary which she also presented to me, and I was struck with the high tone of the poetry."

"This collection is valuable indeed," said I; "it contains poems, which not only possess the highest merit, but serve to confirm the authenticity of the poems of Ossian, published by Macpherson, so often called in question. All the pieces here attributed to Ossian are written in the same metre, tone and spirit as those attributed to him in the other collection, so if Macpherson's Ossianic poems, which he said were collected by him in the Highlands, are forgeries, Smith's Ossianic poems; which according to his account, were also collected in the Highlands, must be also forged, and have been imitated from those published by the other. Now as it is well known that Smith did not possess sufficient poetic power to produce any imitation of Macpherson's Ossian with a tenth part the merit which the Sean Dana possess, and that even if he had possessed it his principles would not have allowed him to attempt to deceive the world by imposing forgeries upon it,

as the authentic poems of another, he being a highly respectable clergyman, the necessary conclusion is that the Ossianic poems which both published are genuine and collected in the manner in which both stated they were."

After a little more discourse about Ossian the old gentleman asked me if there was any good modern Gaelic poetry. "None very modern," said I: "the last great poets of the Gael were Macintyre and Buchanan, who flourished about the middle of the last century. The first sang of love and of Highland scenery; the latter was a religious poet. The best piece of Macintyre is an ode to Ben Dourain, or the Hill of the Water-dogs—a mountain in the Highlands. The master piece of Buchanan is his La Breitheanas or Day of Judgment, which is equal in merit, or nearly so, to the Cywydd y Farn, or Judgment Day of your own immortal Gronwy Owen. Singular that the two best pieces on the Day of Judgment should have been written in two Celtic dialects, and much about the same time; but such is the fact."

"Really," said the old church clerk, "you seem to know something of Celtic literature."

"A little," said I; "I am a bit of a philologist; and when studying languages dip a little into the literature which they contain."

As I had heard him say that he had occasionally given lessons in the Welsh language, I inquired whether any of his pupils had made much progress in it. "The generality," said he, "soon became tired of its difficulties, and gave it up without making any progress at all. Two or three got on tolerably well. One however acquired it in a time so short that it might be deemed marvellous. He was an Oxonian, and came down with another in the vacation in order to study hard against the yearly collegiate examination. He and his friend took lodgings at Pengwern Hall, then a farm-house, and studied and walked about for some time, as other young men from college, who come down here, are in the habit of doing. One day he and his friend came to me who was then clerk, and desired to see the interior of the church.

So I took the key and went with them into the church. When he came to the altar he took up the large Welsh Common Prayer book which was lying there and looked into it.

"'A curious language this Welsh,' said he; 'I should like to learn it.'

"'Many have wished to learn it, without being able,' said I; 'it is no easy language.'

"'I should like to try,' he replied; 'I wish I could find some one who would give me a few lessons.'

"'I have occasionally given instructions in Welsh,' said I, 'and shall be happy to oblige you.'

"Well, it was agreed that he should take lessons of me; and to my house he came every evening, and I gave him what instructions I could. I was astonished at his progress. He acquired the pronunciation in a lesson, and within a week was able to construe and converse. By the time he left Llangollen, and he was not here in all more than two months, he understood the Welsh Bible as well as I did, and could speak Welsh so well that the Welsh, who

did not know him, took him to be one of themselves, for he spoke the language with the very tone and manner of a native. O, he was the cleverest man for language that I ever knew; not a word that he heard did he ever forget."

"Just like Mezzofanti," said I, "the great cardinal philologist. But whilst learning Welsh, did he not neglect his collegiate studies?"

"Well, I was rather apprehensive on that point," said the old gentleman, "but mark the event. At the examination he came off most brilliantly in Latin, Greek, mathematics and other things too; in fact, a double first class man, as I think they call it."

"I never heard of so extraordinary an individual," said I. "I could no more have done what you say he did, than I could have taken wings and flown. Pray what was his name?"

"His name," said the old gentleman, "was Earl."

I was much delighted with my new acquaintance, and paid him frequent visits; the more I saw him the more he interested me.

He was kind and benevolent, a good old Church of England Christian, was well versed in several dialects of the Celtic, and possessed an astonishing deal of Welsh heraldic and antiquarian lore. Often whilst discoursing with him I almost fancied that I was with Master Salisburie, Vaughan of Hengwrt, or some other worthy of old, deeply skilled in every thing remarkable connected with wild "Camber's Lande."

CHAPTER XIX.

THE VICAR AND HIS FAMILY.—EVAN EVANS.—FOAMING ALE.—LLAM Y LLEIDYR.—BAPTISM.—JOOST VAN VONDEL.—OVER TO ROME.—THE MILLER'S MAN.—WELSH AND ENGLISH.

WE had received a call from the Vicar of Llangollen and his lady; we had returned it, and they had done us the kindness to invite us to take tea with them. On the appointed evening we went, myself, wife and Henrietta, and took tea with the vicar and his wife, their sons and daughters, all delightful and amiable beings—the eldest son a fine intelligent young man from Oxford, lately admitted into the Church, and now assisting his father in his sacred office. A delightful residence was the vicarage, situated amongst trees in the neighbourhood of the Dee. A large open window in the room, in which our party sat, afforded us a view of a green plat on the

top of a bank running down to the Dee, part of the river, the steep farther bank covered with umbrageous trees, and a high mountain beyond, even that of Pen y Coed clad with wood. During tea Mr. E. and I had a great deal of discourse. I found him to be a first-rate Greek and Latin scholar, and also a proficient in the poetical literature of his own country. In the course of discourse he repeated some noble lines of Evan Evans, the unfortunate and eccentric Prydydd Hir, or tall poet, the friend and correspondent of Gray, for whom he made literal translations from the Welsh, which the great English genius afterwards wrought into immortal verse.

"I have a great regard for poor Evan Evans," said Mr. E., after he had finished repeating the lines, "for two reasons: first, because he was an illustrious genius, and second, because he was a South-Wallian like myself."

"And I," I replied, "because he was a great poet, and like myself fond of a glass of cwrw da."

Some time after tea the younger Mr. E. and myself took a walk in an eastern direction along a path cut in the bank, just above the stream. After proceeding a little way amongst most romantic scenery I asked my companion if he had ever heard of the pool of Catherine Lingo—the deep pool, as the reader will please to remember, of which John Jones had spoken.

"O yes," said young Mr. E.: "my brothers and myself are in the habit of bathing there almost every morning. We will go to it if you please."

We proceeded, and soon came to the pool. The pool is a beautiful sheet of water, seemingly about one hundred and fifty yards in length, by about seventy in width. It is bounded on the east by a low ridge of rocks forming a weir. The banks on both sides are high and precipitous, and covered with trees, some of which shoot their arms for some way above the face of the pool. This is said to be the deepest pool in the whole course of the Dee, varying in depth from twenty to thirty feet. Enormous pike, called in Welsh penhwiaid, or ducks-heads, from the similarity which the head of a pike

bears to that of a duck, are said to be tenants of this pool.

We returned to the vicarage and at about ten we all sat down to supper. On the supper-table was a mighty pitcher full of foaming ale.

"There," said my excellent host, as he poured me out a glass, "there is a glass of cwrw, which Evan Evans himself might have drunk."

One evening my wife, Henrietta and myself attended by John Jones, went upon the Berwyn a little to the east of the Geraint or Barber's Hill to botanize. Here we found a fern which John Jones called Coed llus y Brân, or the plant of the Crow's berry. There was a hard kind of berry upon it, of which he said the crows were exceedingly fond. We also discovered two or three other strange plants, the Welsh names of which our guide told us, and which were curious and descriptive enough. He took us home by a romantic path which we had never before seen, and on our way pointed out to us a small house in which he said he was born.

The day after finding myself on the banks of the Dee in the upper part of the valley, I

determined to examine the Llam Lleidyr or Robber's Leap, which I had heard spoken of on a former occasion. A man passing near me with a cart I asked him where the Robber's Leap was. I spoke in English, and with a shake of his head he replied "Dim Sæsneg." On my putting the question to him in Welsh, however, his countenance brightened up.

"Dyna Llam Lleidyr, sir!" said he pointing to a very narrow part of the stream a little way down.

"And did the thief take it from this side?" I demanded.

"Yes, sir, from this side," replied the man.

I thanked him and passing over the dry part of the river's bed came to the Llam Lleidyr. The whole water of the Dee in the dry season gurgles here through a passage not more than four feet across, which, however, is evidently profoundly deep, as the water is as dark as pitch. If the thief ever took the leap he must have taken it in the dry season, for in the wet the Dee is a wide and roaring torrent. Yet even in the dry season it is difficult to conceive how

anybody could take this leap, for on the other side is a rock rising high above the dark gurgling stream. On observing the opposite side, however, narrowly, I perceived that there was a small hole a little way up the rock, in which it seemed possible to rest one's foot for a moment. So I supposed that if the leap was ever taken, the individual who took it darted the tip of his foot into the hole, then springing up seized the top of the rock with his hands, and scrambled up. From either side the leap must have been a highly dangerous one—from the farther side the leaper would incur the almost certain risk of breaking his legs on a ledge of hard rock, from this of falling back into the deep horrible stream, which would probably suck him down in a moment.

From the Llam y Lleidyr I went to the canal and walked along it till I came to the house of the old man who sold coals, and who had put me in mind of Smollet's Morgan; he was now standing in his little coal yard, leaning over the pales. I had spoken to him on two or three occasions subsequent to the one on which I made

his acquaintance, and had been every time more and more struck with the resemblance which his ways and manners bore to those of Smollet's character, on which account I shall call him Morgan, though such was not his name. He now told me that he expected that I should build a villa and settle down in the neighbourhood, as I seemed so fond of it. After a little discourse, induced either by my questions or from a desire to talk about himself, he related to me his history, which though not one of the most wonderful I shall repeat. He was born near Aberdarron in Caernarvonshire, and in order to make me understand the position of the place, and its bearing with regard to some other places, he drew marks in the coal-dust on the earth. His father was a baptist minister, who when Morgan was about six years of age went to live at Canol Lyn, a place at some little distance from Port Heli. With his father he continued till he was old enough to gain his own maintenance, when he went to serve a farmer in the neighbourhood. Having saved some money young Morgan departed to the foundries at Cefn Mawr,

at which he worked thirty years, with an interval of four, which he had passed partly in working in slate quarries, and partly upon the canal. About four years before the present time he came to where he now lived, where he commenced selling coals, at first on his own account and subsequently for some other person. He concluded his narration by saying that he was now sixty-two years of age, was afflicted with various disorders, and believed that he was breaking up.

Such was Morgan's history; certainly not a very remarkable one. Yet Morgan was a most remarkable individual, as I shall presently make appear.

Rather affected at the bad account he gave me of his health I asked him if he felt easy in his mind? He replied perfectly so, and when I inquired how he came to feel so comfortable, he said that his feeling so was owing to his baptism into the faith of Christ Jesus. On my telling him that I too had been baptized, he asked me if I had been dipped; and on learning that I had not, but only been sprinkled, accord-

ing to the practice of my church, he gave me to understand that my baptism was not worth three halfpence. Feeling rather nettled at hearing the baptism of my church so undervalued, I stood up for it, and we were soon in a dispute, in which I got rather the worst, for though he spuffled and sputtered in a most extraordinary manner, and spoke in a dialect which was neither Welsh, English nor Cheshire, but a mixture of all three, he said two or three things rather difficult to be got over. Finding that he had nearly silenced me, he observed that he did not deny that I had a good deal of book learning, but that in matters of baptism I was as ignorant as the rest of the people of the church were, and had always been. He then said that many church people had entered into argument with him on the subject of baptism, but that he had got the better of them all; that Mr. P. the minister of the parish of L. in which we then were had frequently entered into argument with him, but quite unsuccessfully, and had at last given up the matter, as a bad job. He added that a little time before, as Mr. P. was

walking close to the canal with his wife and daughter and a spaniel dog, Mr. P. suddenly took up the dog and flung it in giving it a good ducking, whereupon he, Morgan, cried out: "Dyna y gwir vedydd! That is the right baptism sir! I thought I should bring you to it at last!" at which words Mr. P. laughed heartily, but made no particular reply.

After a little time he began to talk about the great men, who had risen up amongst the Baptists, and mentioned two or three distinguished individuals.

I said that he had not mentioned the greatest man who had been born amongst the Baptists.

"What was his name?" said he.

"His name was Joost Van Vondel," I replied.

"I never heard of him before," said Morgan.

"Very probably," said I: "he was born, bred, and died in Holland."

"Has he been dead long?" said Morgan.

"About two hundred years," said I.

"That's a long time," said Morgan, "and may-be is the reason that I never heard of him. So he was a great man?"

"He was indeed," said I. "He was not only the greatest man that ever sprang up amongst the Baptists, but the greatest, and by far the greatest, that Holland ever produced, though Holland has produced a great many illustrious men."

"O, I dare say he was a great man if he was a Baptist," said Morgan. "Well, it's strange I never read of him. I thought I had read the lives of all the eminent people who lived and died in our communion."

"He did not die in the Baptist communion," said I.

"Oh, he didn't die in it," said Morgan; "What, did he go over to the Church of England? a pretty fellow!"

"He did not go over to the Church of England," said I, "for the Church of England does not exist in Holland; he went over to the Church of Rome."

"Well, that's not quite so bad," said Morgan;

however, it's bad enough. I dare say he was a pretty blackguard."

"No," said I: "he was a pure virtuous character, and perhaps the only pure and virtuous character that ever went over to Rome. The only wonder is that so good a man could ever have gone over to so detestable a church; but he appears to have been deluded."

"Deluded indeed!" said Morgan. "However, I suppose he went over for advancement's sake."

"No," said I; "he lost every prospect of advancement by going over to Rome: nine-tenths of his countrymen were of the reformed religion, and he endured much poverty and contempt by the step he took."

"How did he support himself?" said Morgan.

"He obtained a livelihood," said I, "by writing poems and plays, some of which are wonderfully fine."

"What," said Morgan, "a writer of Interludes? One of Twm o'r Nant's gang! I thought he would turn out a pretty fellow." I told him that the person in question certainly did write

Interludes, for example Noah, and Joseph at Goshen, but that he was a highly respectable, nay venerable character.

"If he was a writer of Interludes," said Morgan, "he was a blackguard; there never yet was a writer of Interludes, or a person who went about playing them, that was not a scamp. He might be a clever man, I don't say he was not. Who was a cleverer man than Twm o'r Nant with his Pleasure and Care, and Riches and Poverty, but where was there a greater blackguard? Why, not in all Wales. And if you knew this other fellow—what's his name —Fondle's history, you would find that he was not a bit more respectable than Twm o'r Nant, and not half so clever. As for his leaving the Baptists I don't believe a word of it; he was turned out of the connection, and then went about the country saying he left it. No Baptist connection would ever have a writer of Interludes in it, not Twm o'r Nant himself, unless he left his ales and Interludes and wanton hussies, for the three things are sure to go together. You say he went over to the Church of

Rome; of course he did, if the Church of England were not at hand to receive him, where should he go to but to Rome? No respectable church like the methodist or the independent would have received him. There are only two churches in the world that will take in anybody without asking questions, and will never turn them out however bad they may behave; the one is the Church of Rome, and the other the Church of Canterbury; and if you look into the matter you will find that every rogue, rascal and hanged person since the world began has belonged to one or other of those communions."

In the evening I took a walk with my wife and daughter past the Plas Newydd. Coming to the little mill called the Melyn Bac, at the bottom of the gorge, we went into the yard to observe the water-wheel. We found that it was turned by a very little water, which was conveyed to it by artificial means. Seeing the miller's man, a short dusty figure, standing in the yard I entered into conversation with him, and found to my great surprise that he had a considerable acquaintance with the ancient lan-

guage. On my repeating to him verses from Taliesin he understood them, and to show me that he did translated some of the lines into English. Two or three respectable-looking lads, probably the miller's sons came out, and listened to us. One of them said we were both good Welshmen. After a little time the man asked me if I had heard of Huw Morris. I told him that I was well acquainted with his writings, and enquired whether the place in which he had lived was not somewhere in the neighbourhood. He said it was; and that it was over the mountains not far from Llan Sanfraid. I asked whether it was not called Pont y Meibion. He answered in the affirmative, and added that he had himself been there, and had sat in Huw Morris's stone chair which was still to be seen by the road's side. I told him that I hoped to visit the place in a few days. He replied that I should be quite right in doing so, and that no one should come to these parts without visiting Pont y Meibion, for that Huw Morris was one of the columns of the Cumry.

"What a difference," said I to my wife,

after we had departed, "between a Welshman and an Englishman of the lower class. What would a Suffolk miller's swain have said if I had repeated to him verses out of Beowulf or even Chaucer, and had asked him about the residence of Skelton?"

CHAPTER XX.

HUW MORRIS. — IMMORTAL ELEGY. — THE VALLEY OF CEIRIOG. — TANGLED WILDERNESS.—PERPLEXITY.—CHAIR OF HUW MORRIS.—THE WALKING-STICK.—HUW'S DESCENDANT.—PONT Y MEIBION.

Two days after the last adventure I set off, over the Berwyn, to visit the birth-place of Huw Morris under the guidance of John Jones, who was well acquainted with the spot.

Huw Morus or Morris, was born in the year 1622 on the banks of the Ceiriog. His life was a long one, for he died at the age of eighty-four, after living in six reigns. He was the second son of a farmer, and was apprenticed to a tanner, with whom, however, he did not stay till the expiration of the term of his apprenticeship, for not liking the tanning art, he speedily returned to the house of his father, whom he assisted in husbandry till death called the old man away. He then assisted his elder brother,

and on his elder brother's death, lived with his son. He did not distinguish himself as a husbandman, and appears never to have been fond of manual labour. At an early period, however, he applied himself most assiduously to poetry, and before he had attained the age of thirty was celebrated, throughout Wales, as the best poet of his time. When the war broke out between Charles and his parliament, Huw espoused the part of the king, not as a soldier, for he appears to have liked fighting little better than tanning or husbandry, but as a poet, and probably did the king more service in that capacity, than he would if he had raised him a troop of horse, or a regiment of foot, for he wrote songs breathing loyalty to Charles, and fraught with pungent satire against his foes, which ran like wild fire through Wales, and had a great influence on the minds of the people. Even when the royal cause was lost in the field, he still carried on a poetical war against the successful party, but not so openly as before, dealing chiefly in allegories, which, however, were easy to be understood. Strange to say the

Independents, when they had the upper hand, never interfered with him though they persecuted certain Royalist poets of far inferior note. On the accession of Charles the Second he celebrated the event by a most singular piece called the Lamentation of Oliver's men, in which he assails the Roundheads with the most bitter irony. He was loyal to James the Second, till that monarch attempted to overthrow the Church of England, when Huw, much to his credit, turned against him, and wrote songs in the interest of the glorious Prince of Orange. He died in the reign of good Queen Anne. In his youth his conduct was rather dissolute, but irreproachable and almost holy in his latter days—a kind of halo surrounded his old brow. It was the custom in those days in North Wales for the congregation to leave the church in a row with the clergyman at their head, but so great was the estimation in which old Huw was universally held, for the purity of his life and his poetical gift, that the clergyman of the parish abandoning his claim to precedence, always insisted on the good and in-

spired old man's leading the file, himself following immediately in his rear. Huw wrote on various subjects, mostly in common and easily understood measures. He was great in satire, great in humour, but when he pleased could be greater in pathos than in either; for his best piece is an elegy on Barbara Middleton, the sweetest song of the kind ever written. From his being born on the banks of the brook Ceiriog, and from the flowing melody of his awen or muse, his countrymen were in the habit of calling him Eos Ceiriog, or the Ceiriog Nightingale.

So John Jones and myself set off across the Berwyn to visit the birth-place of the great poet Huw Morris. We ascended the mountain by Allt Paddy. The morning was lowering, and before we had half got to the top it began to rain. John Jones was in his usual good spirits. Suddenly taking me by the arm he told me to look to the right across the gorge to a white house, which he pointed out.

"What is there in that house?" said I.

"An aunt of mine lives there," said he.

Having frequently heard him call old women his aunts, I said, "Every poor old woman in the neighbourhood seems to be your aunt."

"This is no poor old woman," said he, "she is cyfoethawg iawn, and only last week she sent me and my family a pound of bacon, which would have cost me sixpence-halfpenny, and about a month ago a measure of wheat."

We passed over the top of the mountain, and descending the other side reached Llansanfraid, and stopped at the public-house where we had been before, and called for two glasses of ale. Whilst drinking our ale Jones asked some questions about Huw Morris of the woman who served us; she said that he was a famous poet, and that people of his blood were yet living upon the lands which had belonged to him at Pont y Meibion. Jones told her that his companion, the gwr boneddig, meaning myself, had come in order to see the birth-place of Huw Morris, and that I was well acquainted with his works, having gotten them by heart in Lloegr, when a boy. The woman said that nothing would give her greater pleasure than to hear

a Sais recite poetry of Huw Morris, whereupon I recited a number of his lines addressed to the Gôf Du, or blacksmith. The woman held up her hands, and a carter who was in the kitchen, somewhat the worse for liquor, shouted applause. After asking a few questions as to the road we were to take, we left the house, and in a little time entered the valley of Ceiriog. The valley is very narrow, huge hills overhanging it on both sides, those on the east side lumpy and bare, those on the west precipitous, and partially clad with wood; the torrent Ceiriog runs down it, clinging to the east side; the road is tolerably good, and is to the west of the stream. Shortly after we had entered the gorge, we passed by a small farm-house on our right hand, with a hawthorn hedge before it, upon which seems to stand a peacock, curiously cut out of thorn. Passing on we came to a place called Pandy uchaf, or the higher Fulling mill. The place so called is a collection of ruinous houses, which put me in mind of the Fulling mills mentioned in Don Quixote. It is called the Pandy because there was formerly a fulling

mill here, said to have been the first established in Wales; which is still to be seen, but which is no longer worked. Just above the old mill there is a meeting of streams, the Tarw from the west rolls down a dark valley into the Ceiriog.

At the entrance of this valley and just before you reach the Pandy, which it nearly overhangs, is an enormous crag. After I had looked at the place for some time with considerable interest we proceeded towards the south, and in about twenty minutes reached a neat kind of house, on our right hand, which John Jones told me stood on the ground of Huw Morris. Telling me to wait, he went to the house, and asked some questions. After a little time I followed him and found him discoursing at the door with a stout dame about fifty-five years of age, and a stout buxom damsel of about seventeen, very short of stature.

"This is the gentleman," said he, "who wishes to see anything there may be here connected with Huw Morris."

The old dame made me a curtsey, and said

in very distinct Welsh, "We have some things in the house which belonged to him, and we will show them to the gentleman willingly."

"We first of all wish to see his chair," said John Jones.

"The chair is in a wall in what is called the hen ffordd (old road)," said the old gentlewoman; "it is cut out of the stone wall, you will have maybe some difficulty in getting to it, but the girl shall show it to you." The girl now motioned to us to follow her, and conducted us across the road to some stone steps, over a wall to a place which looked like a plantation.

"This was the old road," said Jones; "but the place has been enclosed. The new road is above us on our right hand beyond the wall."

We were in a maze of tangled shrubs, the boughs of which, very wet from the rain which was still falling, struck our faces, as we attempted to make our way between them; the girl led the way, bare-headed and bare-armed, and soon brought us to the wall, the boundary of the new road. Along this she went with considerable difficulty, owing to the tangled

shrubs, and the nature of the ground, which was very precipitous, shelving down to the other side of the enclosure. In a little time we were wet to the skin, and covered with the dirt of birds, which they had left whilst roosting in the trees; on went the girl, sometimes creeping, and trying to keep herself from falling by holding against the young trees; once or twice she fell and we after her, for there was no path, and the ground, as I have said before, very shelvy; still as she went her eyes were directed towards the wall, which was not always very easy to be seen, for thorns, tall nettles and shrubs were growing up against it. Here and there she stopped, and said something, which I could not always make out, for her Welsh was anything but clear; at length I heard her say that she was afraid we had passed the chair, and indeed presently we came to a place where the enclosure terminated in a sharp corner.

"Let us go back," said I; "we must have passed it."

I now went first, breaking down with my weight the shrubs nearest to the wall.

"Is not this the place?" said I, pointing to a kind of hollow in the wall, which looked something like the shape of a chair.

"Hardly," said the girl, "for there should be a slab, on the back, with letters, but there's neither slab nor letters here."

The girl now again went forward, and we retraced our way, doing the best we could to discover the chair, but all to no purpose; no chair was to be found. We had now been, as I imagined, half-an-hour in the enclosure, and had nearly got back to the place from which we had set out, when we suddenly heard the voice of the old lady exclaiming, "What are ye doing there, the chair is on the other side of the field; wait a bit, and I will come and show it you;" getting over the stone stile, which led into the wilderness, she came to us, and we now went along the wall at the lower end; we had quite as much difficulty here, as on the other side, and in some places more, for the nettles were higher, the shrubs more tangled, and the thorns more terrible. The ground, however, was rather more level. I pitied the poor girl who led the way

and whose fat naked arms were both stung and torn. She at last stopped amidst a huge grove of nettles, doing the best she could to shelter her arms from the stinging leaves.

"I never was in such a wilderness in my life," said I to John Jones, "is it possible that the chair of the mighty Huw is in a place like this; which seems never to have been trodden by human foot. Well does the Scripture say 'Dim prophwyd yw yn cael barch yn ei dir ei hunan.'"

This last sentence tickled the fancy of my worthy friend, the Calvinistic-Methodist, he laughed aloud and repeated it over and over again to the females with amplifications.

"Is the chair really here," said I, "or has it been destroyed? if such a thing has been done it is a disgrace to Wales."

"The chair is really here," said the old lady, "and though Huw Morus was no prophet, we love and reverence everything belonging to him. Get on Llances, the chair can't be far off;" the girl moved on, and presently the old lady exclaimed "There's the chair, Diolch i Duw!"

I was the last of the file, but I now rushed past John Jones, who was before me, and next to the old lady, and sure enough there was the chair, in the wall, of him who was called in his day, and still is called by the mountaineers of Wales, though his body has been below the earth in the quiet church-yard, one hundred and forty years, Eos Ceiriog, the Nightingale of Ceiriog, the sweet caroller Huw Morus, the enthusiastic partizan of Charles, and the Church of England, and the never-tiring lampooner of Oliver and the Independents, there it was, a kind of hollow in the stone wall, in the hen ffordd, fronting to the west, just above the gorge at the bottom of which murmurs the brook Ceiriog, there it was, something like a half barrel chair in a garden, a mouldering stone slab forming the seat, and a large slate stone, the back, on which were cut these letters—

H. M. B.

signifying Huw Morus Bard.

"Sit down in the chair, Gwr Boneddig," said John Jones, "you have taken trouble enough to get to it."

"Do, gentleman," said the old lady; "but first let me wipe it with my apron, for it is very wet and dirty."

"Let it be," said I; then taking off my hat I stood uncovered before the chair, and said in the best Welsh I could command, "Shade of Huw Morus, supposing your shade haunts the place which you loved so well when alive—a Saxon, one of the seed of the Coiling Serpent, has come to this place to pay that respect to true genius, the Dawn Duw, which he is ever ready to pay. He read the songs of the Nightingale of Ceiriog in the most distant part of Lloegr, when he was a brown-haired boy, and now that he is a grey-haired man he is come to say in this place that they frequently made his eyes overflow with tears of rapture."

I then sat down in the chair, and commenced repeating verses of Huw Morris. All which I did in the presence of the stout old lady, the short, buxom and bare-armed damsel, and of John Jones the Calvinistic weaver of Llangollen, all of whom listened patiently and approvingly, though the rain was pouring down upon them,

and the branches of the trees and the tops of the tall nettles, agitated by the gusts from the mountain hollows, were beating in their faces, for enthusiasm is never scoffed at by the noble simple-minded, genuine Welsh, whatever treatment it may receive from the coarse-hearted, sensual, selfish Saxon.

After some time our party returned to the house—which put me very much in mind of the farm-houses of the substantial yeomen of Cornwall, particularly that of my friends at Penquite; a comfortable fire blazed in the kitchen grate, the floor was composed of large flags of slate. In the kitchen the old lady pointed to me the ffon, or walking-stick, of Huw Morris; it was supported against a beam by three hooks; I took it down and walked about the kitchen with it; it was a thin polished black stick, with a crome cut in the shape of an eagle's head; at the end was a brass fence. The kind creature then produced a sword without a scabbard; this sword was found by Huw Morris on the mountain—it belonged to one of Oliver's officers who was killed there. I took the sword, which

was a thin two-edged one, and seemed to be made of very good steel; it put me in mind of the blades which I had seen at Toledo—the guard was very slight like those of all rapiers, and the hilt the common old-fashioned English officer's hilt—there was no rust on the blade, and it still looked a dangerous sword. A man like Thistlewood, would have whipped it through his adversary in a twinkling. I asked the old lady if Huw Morris was born in this house; she said no, but a little farther on at Pont y Meibion; she said, however, that the ground had belonged to him, and that they had some of his blood in their veins. I shook her by the hand, and gave the chubby bare-armed damsel a shilling, pointing to the marks of the nettle stings on her fat bacon-like arms, she laughed, made me a curtsey and said "Llawer iawn o diolch."

John Jones and I then proceeded to the house at Pont y Meibion, where we saw two men, one turning a grindstone, and the other holding an adze to it. We asked if we were at the house of Huw Morris, and whether they

could tell us anything about him, they made us no answer but proceeded with their occupation; John Jones then said that the Gwr Boneddig was very fond of the verses of Huw Morris, and had come a great way to see the place where he was born—the wheel now ceased turning, and the man with the adze turned his face full upon me—he was a stern-looking, dark man, with black hair of about forty; after a moment or two he said, that if I chose to walk into the house, I should be welcome. He then conducted us into the house, a common-looking stone tenement, and bade us be seated. I asked him if he was a descendant of Huw Morus, he said he was; I asked him his name, which he said was Huw ——. "Have you any of the manuscripts of Huw Morus?" said I.

"None," said he, "but I have one of the printed copies of his works."

He then went to a drawer, and taking out a book, put it into my hand, and seated himself in a blunt, careless manner. The book was the first volume of the common Wrexham edition of Huw's works; it was much thumbed—I com-

menced reading aloud a piece which I had much admired in my boyhood. I went on for some time, my mind quite occupied with my reading; at last lifting up my eyes I saw the man standing bolt upright before me, like a soldier of the days of my childhood, during the time that the adjutant read prayers; his hat was no longer upon his head, but on the ground, and his eyes were reverently inclined to the book. After all what a beautiful thing it is, not to be, but to have been a genius. Closing the book, I asked him whether Huw Morris was born in the house where we were, and received for answer that he was born about where we stood, but that the old house had been pulled down, and that of all the premises only a small outhouse was coeval with Huw Morris. I asked him the name of the house, and he said Pont y Meibion. "But where is the bridge?" said I.

"The bridge," he replied, "is close by, over the Ceiriog. If you wish to see it, you must go down yon field, the house is called after the bridge." Bidding him farewell, we crossed the road and going down the field

speedily arrived at Pont y Meibion. The bridge is a small bridge of one arch which crosses the brook Ceiriog—it is built of rough moor stone; it is mossy, broken and looks almost inconceivably old, there is a little parapet to it about two feet high. On the right-hand side it is shaded by an ash, the brook when we viewed it, though at times a roaring torrent, was stealing along gently. On both sides it is overgrown with alders, noble hills rise above it to the east and west, John Jones told me that it abounded with trout. I asked him why the bridge was called Pont y Meibion, which signifies the bridge of the children. "It was built originally by children," said he, "for the purpose of crossing the brook."

"That bridge," said I, "was never built by children."

"The first bridge," said he, "was of wood, and was built by the children of the houses above."

Not quite satisfied with his explanation, I asked him to what place the road across the little bridge led, and was told that he believed it led to an upland farm. After taking a long

and wistful view of the bridge and the scenery around it, I turned my head in the direction of Llangollen. The adventures of the day were, however, not finished.

CHAPTER XXI.

THE GLOOMY VALLEY.—THE LONELY COTTAGE.—HAPPY COMPARISON.—CLOGS.—THE ALDER SWAMP.—THE WOODEN LEG.—THE MILITIA-MAN.—DEATH-BED VERSES.

On reaching the ruined village where the Pandy stood I stopped, and looked up the gloomy valley to the west, down which the brook which joins the Ceiriog at this place descends, whereupon John Jones said, that if I wished to go up it a little way he should have great pleasure in attending me, and that he would show me a cottage built in the hen ddull, or old fashion, to which he frequently went to ask for the rent; he being employed by various individuals in the capacity of rent-gatherer. I said that I was afraid that if he was a rent-collector, both he and I should have a sorry welcome. "No fear," he replied, "the people are very good people, and

pay their rent very regularly," and without saying another word he led the way up the valley. At the end of the village, seeing a woman standing at the door of one of the ruinous cottages, I asked her the name of the brook, or torrent, which came down the valley. "The Tarw," said she, "and this village is called Pandy Teirw."

"Why is the streamlet called the bull?" said I. "Is it because it comes in winter weather roaring down the glen and butting at the Ceiriog?"

The woman laughed, and replied that perhaps it was. The valley was wild and solitary to an extraordinary degree, the brook or torrent running in the middle of it covered with alder trees. After we had proceeded about a furlong we reached the house of the old fashion—it was a rude stone cottage standing a little above the road on a kind of platform on the right-hand side of the glen; there was a paling before it with a gate, at which a pig was screaming, as if anxious to get in. "It wants its dinner," said

John Jones, and opened the gate for me to pass, taking precautions that the screamer did not enter at the same time. We entered the cottage, very glad to get into it, a storm of wind and rain having just come on. Nobody was in the kitchen when we entered, it looked comfortable enough, however, there was an excellent fire of wood and coals, and a very snug chimney-corner. John Jones called aloud, but for some time no one answered; at last a rather good-looking woman, seemingly about thirty made her appearance, at a door at the farther end of the kitchen. "Is the mistress at home," said Jones, "or the master?"

"They are neither at home," said the woman, "the master is abroad at his work, and the mistress is at the farm-house of —— three miles off to pick feathers (trwsio plu)." She asked us to sit down.

"And who are you?" said I.

"I am only a lodger," said she, "I lodge here with my husband who is a clog-maker."

"Can you speak English?" said I.

"O yes," said she, "I lived eleven years

in England, at a place called Bolton, where I married my husband, who is an Englishman."

"Can he speak Welsh?" said I.

"Not a word," said she. "We always speak English together."

John Jones sat down, and I looked about the room. It exhibited no appearance of poverty; there was plenty of rude but good furniture in it; several pewter plates and trenchers in a rack, two or three prints in frames against the wall, one of which was the likeness of no less a person than the Rev. Joseph Sanders, on the table was a newspaper. "Is that in Welsh?" said I.

No," replied the woman, "it is the Bolton Chronicle, my husband reads it."

I sat down in the chimney-corner. The wind was now howling abroad, and the rain was beating against the cottage panes—presently a gust of wind came down the chimney, scattering sparks all about. "A cataract of sparks!" said I, using the word Rhaiadr.

"What is Rhaiadr?" said the woman; "I never heard the word before."

"Rhaiadr means water tumbling over a rock," said John Jones—"did you never see water tumble over the top of a rock?"

"Frequently," said she.

"Well," said he, "even as the water with its froth tumbles over the rock, so did sparks and fire tumble over the front of that grate when the wind blew down the chimney. It was a happy comparison of the Gwr Boneddig, and with respect to Rhaiadr it is a good old word, though not a common one; some of the Saxons who have read the old writings, though they cannot speak the language as fast as we, understand many words and things which we do not."

"I forgot much of my Welsh, in the land of the Saxons," said the woman, "and so have many others; there are plenty of Welsh at Bolton, but their Welsh is sadly corrupted."

She then went out and presently returned with an infant in her arms and sat down. "Was that child born in Wales?" I demanded.

"No," said she, "he was born at Bolton,

about eighteen months ago—we have been here only a year."

"Do many English," said I, "marry Welsh wives?"

"A great many," said she. "Plenty of Welsh girls are married to Englishmen at Bolton."

"Do the Englishmen make good husbands?" said I.

The woman smiled and presently sighed.

"Her husband," said Jones, "is fond of a glass of ale and is often at the public-house."

"I make no complaint," said the woman, looking somewhat angrily at John Jones.

"Is your husband a tall bulky man?" said I.

"Just so," said the woman.

"The largest of the two men we saw the other night at the public-house at Llansanfraid," said I to John Jones.

"I don't know him," said Jones, "though I have heard of him, but I have no doubt that was he."

I asked the woman how her husband could

carry on the trade of a clog-maker in such a remote place—and also whether he hawked his clogs about the country.

"We call him a clog-maker," said the woman, "but the truth is that he merely cuts down the wood and fashions it into squares, these are taken by an under-master who sends them to the manufacturer at Bolton, who employs hands, who make them into clogs."

"Some of the English," said Jones, "are so poor that they cannot afford to buy shoes; a pair of shoes cost ten or twelve shillings, whereas a pair of clogs cost only two."

"I suppose," said I, "that what you call clogs are wooden shoes."

"Just so," said Jones—"they are principally used in the neighbourhood of Manchester."

"I have seen them at Huddersfield," said I, "when I was a boy at school there; of what wood are they made?"

"Of the gwern, or alder tree," said the woman, "of which there is plenty on both sides of the brook."

John Jones now asked her if she could give

him a tamaid of bread; she said she could, "and some butter with it."

She then went out and presently returned with a loaf and some butter.

"Had you not better wait," said I, "till we get to the inn at Llansanfraid?"

The woman, however, begged him to eat some bread and butter where he was, and cutting a plateful, placed it before him, having first offered me some which I declined.

"But you have nothing to drink with it," said I to him.

"If you please," said the woman, "I will go for a pint of ale to the public-house at the Pandy, there is better ale there than at the inn at Llansanfraid. When my husband goes to Llansanfraid he goes less for the ale than for the conversation, because there is little English spoken at the Pandy, however good the ale."

John Jones said he wanted no ale—and attacking the bread and butter speedily made an end of it; by the time he had done the storm was over, and getting up I gave the child twopence, and left the cottage with

Jones. We proceeded some way farther up the valley, till we came to a place where the ground descended a little. Here Jones touching me on the shoulder pointed across the stream. Following with my eye the direction of his finger, I saw two or three small sheds with a number of small reddish blocks, in regular piles beneath them. Several trees felled from the side of the torrent were lying near, some of them stripped of their arms and bark. A small tree formed a bridge across the brook to the sheds.

"It is there," said John Jones, "that the husband of the woman, with whom we have been speaking works, felling trees from the alder swamp and cutting them up into blocks. I see there is no work going on at present or we would go over—the woman told me that her husband was at Llangollen."

"What a strange place to come to work at," said I, "out of crowded England. Here is nothing to be heard but the murmuring of waters and the rushing of wind down the gulleys. If the man's head is not full of poetical fancies, which

I suppose it is not, as in that case he would be unfit for any useful employment, I don't wonder at his occasionally going to the public-house."

After going a little farther up the glen and observing nothing more remarkable than we had seen already, we turned back. Being overtaken by another violent shower just as we reached the Pandy I thought that we could do no better than shelter ourselves within the public-house, and taste the ale, which the wife of the clog-maker had praised. We entered the little hostelry which was one of two or three shabby-looking houses, standing in contact, close by the Ceiriog. In a kind of little back room, lighted by a good fire and a window, which looked up the Ceiriog valley, we found the landlady, a gentlewoman with a wooden leg, who on perceiving me got up from a chair, and made me the best curtsey that I ever saw made by a female with such a substitute for a leg of flesh and bone. There were three men, sitting with jugs of ale near them on a table by the fire, two were seated on a bench by the wall, and the other on a settle with a high back, which ran from the

wall just by the door, and shielded those by the fire from the draughts of the doorway. He of the settle no sooner beheld me than he sprang up and placing a chair for me by the fire bade me in English be seated, and then resumed his own seat. John Jones soon finding a chair came and sat down by me, when I forthwith called for a quart of cwrw da. The landlady bustled about on her wooden leg and presently brought us the ale with two glasses, which I filled and taking one drank to the health of the company who returned us thanks, the man of the settle in English rather broken. Presently one of his companions getting up paid his reckoning and departed, the other remained, a stout young fellow dressed something like a stone-mason, which indeed I soon discovered that he was—he was far advanced towards a state of intoxication and talked very incoherently about the war, saying that he hoped it would soon terminate for that if it continued he was afraid he might stand a chance of being shot, as he was a private in the Denbighshire Militia. I told him that it was the duty of every gentleman in the

militia, to be willing at all times to lay down his life in the service of the queen. The answer which he made I could not exactly understand, his utterance being very indistinct, and broken; it was, however, made with some degree of violence, with two or three Myn Diawls, and a blow on the table with his clenched fist. He then asked me whether I thought the militia would be again called out. "Nothing more probable," said I.

"And where would they be sent to?"

"Perhaps to Ireland," was my answer, whereupon he started up with another Myn Diawl, expressing the greatest dread of being sent to Iwerddon.

"You ought to rejoice in your chance of going there," said I, "Iwerddon is a beautiful country, and abounds with whiskey."

"And the Irish?" said he.

"Hearty, jolly fellows," said I, "if you know how to manage them, and all gentlemen."

Here he became very violent, saying that I did not speak truth, for that he had seen

plenty of Irish camping amidst the hills, that the men were half naked and the women three parts so, and that they carried their children on their backs. He then said that he hoped somebody would speedily kill Nicholas, in order that the war might be at an end and himself not sent to Iwerddon. He then asked if I thought Cronstadt could be taken. I said I believed it could, provided the hearts of those who were sent to take it were in the right place.

"Where do you think the hearts of those are who are gone against it?" said he—speaking with great vehemence.

I made no other answer than by taking my glass and drinking.

His companion now looking at our habiliments which were in rather a dripping condition asked John Jones if we had come from far.

"We have been to Pont y Meibion," said Jones, "to see the chair of Huw Morris," adding that the Gwr Boneddig was a great admirer of the songs of the Eos Ceiriog.

He had no sooner said these words than the intoxicated militiaman started up, and striking

the table with his fist said: "I am a poor stonecutter—this is a rainy day and I have come here to pass it in the best way I can. I am somewhat drunk, but though I am a poor stonemason, a private in the militia, and not so sober as I should be, I can repeat more of the songs of the Eos than any man alive, however great a gentleman, however sober—more than Sir Watkin, more than Colonel Biddulph himself."

He then began to repeat what appeared to be poetry, for I could distinguish the rhymes occasionally, though owing to his broken utterance it was impossible for me to make out the sense of the words. Feeling a great desire to know what verses of Huw Morris the intoxicated youth would repeat I took out my pocket-book and requested Jones, who was much better acquainted with Welsh pronunciation, under any circumstances, than myself, to endeavour to write down from the mouth of the young fellow any verses uppermost in his mind. Jones took the pocket-book and pencil and went to the window, followed by the young man scarcely able to support himself. Here a

curious scene took place, the drinker hiccuping up verses, and Jones dotting them down, in the best manner he could, though he had evidently great difficulty to distinguish what was said to him. At last, methought, the young man said —"There they are, the verses of the Nightingale, on his death-bed."

I took the book and read aloud the following lines beautifully descriptive of the eagerness of a Christian soul to leave its perishing tabernacle, and get to Paradise and its Creator :—

Myn'd i'r wyl ar redeg,
I'r byd a beryi chwaneg,
I Beradwys, y ber wiw deg,
Yn Enw Duw yn union deg.

"Do you understand those verses?" said the man on the settle, a dark swarthy fellow with an oblique kind of vision, and dressed in a pepper-and-salt coat.

"I will translate them," said I; "and forthwith put them into English—first into prose and then into rhyme, the rhymed version running thus :—

'Now to my rest I hurry away,
To the world which lasts for ever and aye,
To Paradise, the beautiful place,
Trusting alone in the Lord of Grace.'—

"Well," said he of the pepper-and-salt, "if that isn't capital I don't know what is."

A scene in a public-house, yes! but in a Welsh public-house. Only think of a Suffolk toper repeating the death-bed verses of a poet; surely there is a considerable difference between the Celt and the Saxon.

CHAPTER XXII.

LLANGOLLEN FAIR.—BUYERS AND SELLERS.—THE JOCKEY.—THE GREEK CAP.

ON the twenty-first was held Llangollen Fair. The day was dull with occasional showers. I went to see the fair about noon. It was held in and near a little square in the south-east quarter of the town, of which square the police-station is the principal feature on the side of the west, and an inn, bearing the sign of the Grapes, on the east. The fair was a little bustling fair, attended by plenty of people from the country, and from the English border, and by some who appeared to come from a greater distance than the border. A dense row of carts extended from the police-station, half across the space, these carts were filled with pigs, and had stout cord-nettings drawn over them, to prevent

the animals escaping. By the sides of these carts the principal business of the fair appeared to be going on—there stood the owners male and female, higgling with Llangollen men and women, who came to buy. The pigs were all small, and the price given seemed to vary from eighteen to twenty-five shillings. Those who bought pigs generally carried them away in their arms; and then there was no little diversion; dire was the screaming of the porkers, yet the purchaser invariably appeared to know how to manage his bargain, keeping the left arm round the body of the swine and with the right hand fast griping the ear—some few were led away by strings. There were some Welsh cattle, small of course, and the purchasers of these seemed to be Englishmen, tall burly fellows in general, far exceeding the Welsh in height and size.

Much business in the cattle-line did not seem, however, to be going on. Now and then a big fellow made an offer, and held out his hand for a little Pictish grazier to give it a slap—a cattle bargain being concluded by a slap of the hand

—but the Welshman generally turned away, with a half resentful exclamation. There were a few horses and ponies in a street leading into the fair from the south.

I saw none sold, however. A tall athletic figure was striding amongst them, evidently a jockey and a stranger, looking at them and occasionally asking a slight question of one or another of their proprietors but he did not buy. He might in age be about eight-and-twenty, and about six feet and three quarters of an inch in height; in build he was perfection itself, a better-built man I never saw. He wore a cap and a brown jockey coat, trowsers leggings and highlows, and sported a single spur. He had whiskers—all jockeys should have whiskers—but he had what I did not like, and what no genuine jockey should have, a moustache, which looks coxcombical and Frenchified—but most things have terribly changed since I was young. Three or four hardy-looking fellows, policemen, were gliding about in their blue coats and leather hats, holding their thin walking-sticks behind them; conspicuous amongst whom was

the leader, a tall lathy North Briton with a keen eye and hard features. Now if I add there was much gabbling of Welsh round about, and here and there some slight sawing of English—that in the street leading from the north there were some stalls of gingerbread and a table at which a queer-looking being with a red Greek-looking cap on his head, sold rhubarb, herbs, and phials containing the Lord knows what, and who spoke a low vulgar English dialect,—I repeat, if I add this, I think I have said all that is necessary about Llangollen Fair.

CHAPTER XXIII.

AN EXPEDITION.—PONT Y PANDY.—THE SABBATH.—GLENDOWER'S MOUNT.—BURIAL-PLACE OF OLD.—CORWEN.—THE DEEP GLEN.—THE GRANDMOTHER.—THE ROADSIDE CHAPEL.

I WAS now about to leave Llangollen, for a short time, and to set out on an expedition to Bangor, Snowdon, and one or two places in Anglesea. I had determined to make the journey on foot, in order that I might have perfect liberty of action, and enjoy the best opportunities of seeing the country. My wife and daughter were to meet me at Bangor, to which place they would repair by the railroad, and from which, after seeing some of the mountain districts, they would return to Llangollen by the way they came, where I proposed to rejoin them, returning, however, by a different way from the one I went, that I might traverse new districts. About eleven o'clock of a bril-

liant Sunday morning I left Llangollen, after reading the morning-service of the Church to my family. I set out on a Sunday because I was anxious to observe the general demeanour of the people, in the interior of the country, on the Sabbath.

I directed my course towards the west, to the head of the valley. My wife and daughter after walking with me about a mile bade me farewell, and returned. Quickening my pace I soon left the Llangollen valley behind me and entered another vale, along which the road which I was following, and which led to Corwen and other places, might be seen extending for miles. Lumpy hills were close upon my left, the Dee running noisily between steep banks, fringed with trees, was on my right; beyond it rose hills which form part of the wall of the vale of Clwyd; their tops bare, but their sides pleasantly coloured with yellow cornfields and woods of dark verdure. About an hour's walking, from the time when I entered the valley, brought me to a bridge over a gorge, down which water ran to the Dee. I stopped

and looked over the side of the bridge nearest to the hill. A huge rock about forty feet long, by twenty broad, occupied the entire bed of the gorge, just above the bridge, with the exception of a little gullet to the right, down which between the rock and a high bank, on which stood a cottage, a run of water purled and brawled. The rock looked exactly like a huge whale lying on its side, with its back turned towards the runnel. Above it was a glen with trees. After I had been gazing a little time a man making his appearance at the door of the cottage just beyond the bridge I passed on, and drawing nigh to him, after a slight salutation, asked him in English the name of the bridge.

"The name of the bridge, sir," said the man, in very good English, "is Pont y Pandy."

"Does not that mean the bridge of the fulling mill?"

"I believe it does, sir," said the man.

"Is there a fulling mill near?"

"No sir, there was one some time ago, but it is now a sawing mill."

Here a woman, coming out, looked at me steadfastly.

"Is that gentlewoman your wife?"

"She is no gentlewoman, sir, but she is my wife."

"Of what religion are you?"

"We are Calvinistic-Methodists, sir."

"Have you been to chapel?"

"We are just returned, sir."

Here the woman said something to her husband, which I did not hear, but the purport of which I guessed from the following question which he immediately put.

"Have you been to chapel, sir?"

"I do not go to chapel; I belong to the Church."

"Have you been to church, sir?"

"I have not—I said my prayers at home, and then walked out."

"It is not right to walk out on the Sabbath day, except to go to church or chapel."

"Who told you so?"

"The law of God, which says you shall keep holy the Sabbath day."

"I am not keeping it unholy."

"You are walking about, and in Wales when we see a person walking idly about, on the Sabbath day, we are in the habit of saying Sabbath breaker, where are you going?"

"The Son of Man walked through the fields on the Sabbath day, why should I not walk along the roads?"

"He who called Himself the Son of Man was God, and could do what He pleased, but you are not God."

"But He came in the shape of a man to set an example. Had there been anything wrong in walking about on the Sabbath day, He would not have done it."

Here the wife exclaimed, "How worldly-wise these English are!"

"You do not like the English," said I.

"We do not dislike them," said the woman; "at present they do us no harm, what ever they did of old."

"But you still consider them," said I, "the seed of Y Sarfes cadwynog, the coiling serpent."

"I should be loth to call any people the seed of the serpent," said the woman.

"But one of your great bards did," said I.

"He must have belonged to the Church, and not to the chapel then," said the woman. "No person who went to chapel would have used such bad words."

"He lived," said I, "before people were separated into those of the Church, and the chapel; did you ever hear of Taliesin Ben Beirdd?"

"I never did," said the woman.

"But I have," said the man; "and of Owain Glendower too."

"Do people talk much of Owen Glendower in these parts?" said I.

"Plenty," said the man, "and no wonder, for when he was alive he was much about here—some way farther on there is a mount, on the bank of the Dee, called the mount of Owen Glendower, where it is said he used to stand and look out after his enemies."

"Is it easy to find?" said I.

"Very easy," said the man, "it stands right

upon the Dee and is covered with trees ; there is no mistaking it."

I bade the man and his wife farewell, and proceeded on my way. After walking about a mile, I perceived a kind of elevation which answered to the description of Glendower's mount, which the man by the bridge had given me. It stood on the right hand, at some distance from the road, across a field. As I was standing looking at it a man came up from the direction in which I myself had come. He was a middle-aged man plainly but decently dressed, and had something of the appearance of a farmer.

"What hill may that be?" said I in English, pointing to the elevation.

"Dim Saesneg, sir," said the man, looking rather sheepish, "Dim gair o Saesneg."

Rather surprised that a person of his appearance should not have a word of English I repeated my question in Welsh.

"Ah, you speak Cumraeg, sir;" said the man evidently surprised that a person of my English appearance should speak Welsh. "I am glad of

it! What hill is that, you ask—Dyna Mont Owain Glyndwr, sir."

"Is it easy to get to?" said I.

"Quite easy, sir," said the man. "If you please I will go with you."

I thanked him, and opening a gate he conducted me across the field to the mount of the Welsh hero.

The mount of Owen Glendower stands close upon the southern bank of the Dee, and is nearly covered with trees of various kinds. It is about thirty feet high from the plain, and about the same diameter at the top. A deep black pool of the river which here runs far beneath the surface of the field, purls and twists under the northern side, which is very steep, though several large oaks spring out of it. The hill is evidently the work of art, and appeared to me to be some burying-place of old.

"And this is the hill of Owain Glyndwr?" said I.

"Dyma Mont Owain Glyndwr, sir, lle yr oedd yn sefyll i edrych am ei elynion yn dyfod

o Gaer Lleon. This is the hill of Owen Glendower, sir, where he was in the habit of standing to look out for his enemies coming from Chester."

"I suppose it was not covered with trees then?" said I.

"No sir; it has not been long planted with trees. They say, however, that the oaks which hang over the river are very old."

"Do they say who raised this hill?"

"Some say that God raised it, sir; others that Owain Glendower raised it. Who do you think raised it?"

"I believe that it was raised by man, but not by Owen Glendower. He may have stood upon it, to watch for the coming of his enemies, but I believe it was here long before his time and that it was raised over some old dead king by the people whom he had governed."

"Do they bury kings by the side of rivers, sir?"

"In the old time they did, and on the tops of mountains; they burnt their bodies to ashes, placed them in pots and raised heaps of earth or

stones over them. Heaps like this have frequently been opened, and found to contain pots with ashes and bones."

"I wish all English could speak Welsh, sir."

"Why?"

"Because then we poor Welsh who can speak no English could learn much which we do not know."

Descending the monticle we walked along the road together. After a little time I asked my companion of what occupation he was and where he lived.

"I am a small farmer, sir," said he, "and live at Llansanfraid Glyn Dyfrdwy across the river."

"How comes it," said I, "that you do not know English?"

"When I was young," said he, "and could have easily learnt it, I cared nothing about it, and now that I am old and see its use, it is too late to acquire it."

"Of what religion are you?" said I.

"I am of the Church," he replied.

I was about to ask him if there were many people of his persuasion in these parts; before, however, I could do so he turned down a road to the right which led towards a small bridge, and saying that was his way home, bade me farewell and departed.

I arrived at Corwen which is just ten miles from Llangollen and which stands beneath a vast range of rocks at the head of the valley up which I had been coming, and which is called Glyndyfrdwy, or the valley of the Dee water. It was now about two o'clock, and feeling rather thirsty I went to an inn very appropriately called the Owen Glendower, being the principal inn in the principal town of what was once the domain of the great Owen. Here I stopped for about an hour refreshing myself and occasionally looking into a newspaper in which was an excellent article on the case of poor Lieutenant P. I then started for Cerrig y Drudion, distant about ten miles, where I proposed to pass the night. Directing my course to the north-west, I crossed a bridge over the Dee water and then proceeded rapidly along the road, which for some way

lay between corn-fields, in many of which sheaves were piled up, showing that the Welsh harvest was begun. I soon passed over a little stream the name of which I was told was Alowan. "O, what a blessing it is to be able to speak Welsh!" said I, finding that not a person to whom I addressed myself had a word of English to bestow upon me. After walking for about five miles I came to a beautiful but wild country of mountain and wood with here and there a few cottages. The road at length making an abrupt turn to the north I found myself with a low stone wall on my left on the verge of a profound ravine, and a high bank covered with trees on my right. Projecting out over the ravine was a kind of looking place, protected by a wall, forming a half-circle, doubtless made by the proprietor of the domain for the use of the admirers of scenery. There I stationed myself, and for some time enjoyed one of the wildest and most beautiful scenes imaginable. Below me was the deep narrow glen or ravine down which a mountain torrent roared and foamed. Beyond it was a mountain rising steeply, its

nearer side, which was in deep shade, the sun having long sunk below its top, hirsute with all kinds of trees, from the highest pinnacle down to the torrent's brink. Cut on the top surface of the wall, which was of slate and therefore easily impressible by the knife, were several names, doubtless those of tourists, who had gazed from the look-out on the prospect, amongst which I observed in remarkably bold letters that of T . . . .

"Eager for immortality Mr. T.," said I; "but you are no H. M. no Huw Morris."

Leaving the looking place I proceeded, and, after one or two turnings, came to another, which afforded a view if possible yet more grand, beautiful and wild, the most prominent objects of which were a kind of devil's bridge flung over the deep glen and its foaming water, and a strange-looking hill beyond it, below which with a wood on either side stood a white farm-house—sending from a tall chimney a thin misty reek up to the sky. I crossed the bridge, which however diabolically fantastical it looked at a distance, seemed when one was upon it, capable

of bearing any weight, and soon found myself by the farm-house past which the way led. An aged woman sat on a stool by the door.

"A fine evening," said I in English.

"Dim Saesneg;" said the aged woman.

"O, the blessing of being able to speak Welsh," said I; and then repeated in that language what I had said to her in the other tongue.

"I dare say," said the aged woman, "to those who can see."

"Can you not see?"

"Very little. I am almost blind."

"Can you not see me?"

"I can see something tall and dark before me; that is all."

"Can you tell me the name of the bridge?"

"Pont y Glyn blin—the bridge of the glen of trouble."

"And what is the name of this place?"

"Pen y bont—the head of the bridge."

"What is your own name?"

"Catherine Hughes."

"How old are you?"

"Fifteen after three twenties."

"I have a mother three after four twenties; that is eight years older than yourself."

"Can she see?"

"Better than I—she can read the smallest letters."

"May she long be a comfort to you!"

"Thank you—are you the mistress of the house?"

"I am the grandmother."

"Are the people in the house?"

"They are not—they are at the chapel."

"And they left you alone?"

"They left me with my God."

"Is the chapel far from here?"

"About a mile."

"On the road to Cerrig y Drudion?"

"On the road to Cerrig y Drudion."

I bade her farewell, and pushed on—the road was good, with high rocky banks on each side. After walking about the distance indicated by the old lady I reached a building, which stood on the right-hand side of the road, and which I had no doubt was the chapel from

a half-groaning, half-singing noise which proceeded from it. The door being open I entered, and stood just within it, bare-headed. A rather singular scene presented itself. Within a large dimly-lighted room a number of people were assembled, partly seated in rude pews, and partly on benches. Beneath a kind of altar, a few yards from the door, stood three men—the middlemost was praying in Welsh in a singular kind of chant, with his arms stretched out. I could distinguish the words, "Jesus descend among us! sweet Jesus descend among us—quickly." He spoke very slowly, and towards the end of every sentence dropped his voice, so that what he said was anything but distinct. As I stood within the door a man dressed in coarse garments came up to me from the interior of the building, and courteously and in excellent Welsh, asked me to come with him and take a seat. With equal courtesy but far inferior Welsh, I assured him that I meant no harm, but wished to be permitted to remain near the door, whereupon with a low bow he left me. When the man had concluded his prayer the

whole of the congregation began singing a hymn, many of the voices were gruff and discordant, two or three, however, were of great power, and some of the female ones of surprising sweetness—at the conclusion of the hymn another of the three men by the altar began to pray, just in the same manner as his comrade had done, and seemingly using much the same words. When he had done there was another hymn, after which seeing that the congregation was about to break up I bowed my head towards the interior of the building, and departed.

Emerging from the hollow way I found myself on a moor over which the road lay in the direction of the north. Towards the west at an immense distance rose a range of stupendous hills, which I subsequently learned were those of Snowdon—about ten minutes' walking brought me to Cerrig y Drudion, a small village near a rocky elevation, from which, no doubt, the place takes its name, which interpreted, is the Rock of Heroes.

CHAPTER XXIV.

CERRIG Y DRUDION. — THE LANDLADY. — DOCTOR JONES. — COLL GWYNFA. — THE ITALIAN. — MEN OF COMO. — DISAPPOINTMENT. — WEATHER-GLASSES. — FILICAIA.

THE inn at Cerrig y Drudion was called the Lion—whether the white, black, red or green Lion I do not know, though I am certain that it was a lion of some colour or other. It seemed as decent and respectable a hostelry as any traveller could wish, to refresh and repose himself in, after a walk of twenty miles. I entered a well-lighted passage and from thence a well-lighted bar room, on the right hand, in which sat a stout, comely, elderly lady dressed in silks and satins, with a cambric coif on her head, in company with a thin, elderly man with a hat on his head, dressed in a rather prim and precise manner. "Madam!" said I, bowing to the

lady, "as I suppose you are the mistress of this establishment, I beg leave to inform you that I am an Englishman walking through these regions in order fully to enjoy their beauties and wonders. I have this day come from Llangollen, and being somewhat hungry and fatigued hope I can be accommodated here with a dinner and a bed."

"Sir!" said the lady getting up and making me a profound curtsy, "I am as you suppose the mistress of this establishment, and am happy to say that I shall be able to accommodate you—pray sit down, sir;" she continued handing me a chair, "you must indeed be tired, for Llangollen is a great way from here."

I took the seat with thanks, and she resumed her own.

"Rather hot weather for walking, sir!" said the precise-looking gentleman.

"It is," said I; "but as I can't observe the country well without walking through it I put up with the heat."

"You exhibit a philosophic mind, sir," said

the precise-looking gentleman—"and a philosophic mind I hold in reverence."

"Pray sir," said I, "have I the honour of addressing a member of the medical profession?"

"Sir," said the precise-looking gentleman, getting up and making me a bow, "your question does honour to your powers of discrimination—a member of the medical profession I am, though an unworthy one."

"Nay, nay, doctor," said the landlady briskly; "say not so—everyone knows that you are a credit to your profession—well would it be if there were many in it like you—unworthy? marry come up! I won't hear such an expression."

"I see," said I, "that I have not only the honour of addressing a medical gentleman, but a doctor of medicine—however, I might have known as much by your language and deportment."

With a yet lower bow than before he replied with something of a sigh. "No, sir, no, our kind landlady and the neighbourhood are in the

habit of placing doctor before my name, but I have no title to it—I am not Doctor Jones, sir, but plain Geffery Jones at your service," and thereupon with another bow he sat down.

"Do you reside here?" said I.

"Yes, sir, I reside here in the place of my birth—I have not always resided here—and I did not always expect to spend my latter days in a place of such obscurity, but, sir, misfortunes—misfortunes . . . ."

"Ah," said I, "misfortunes! they pursue every one, more especially those whose virtues should exempt them from them. Well, sir; the consciousness of not having deserved them should be your consolation."

"Sir," said the doctor taking off his hat, "you are infinitely kind."

"You call this an obscure place," said I—"can that be an obscure place which has produced a poet? I have long had a respect for Cerrig y Drudion because it gave birth to, and was the residence of a poet of considerable merit."

"I was not aware of that fact," said the doctor, "pray what was his name?"

"Peter Lewis," said I; "he was a clergyman of Cerrig y Drudion about the middle of the last century, and amongst other things wrote a beautiful song called Cathl y Gair Mwys, or the melody of the ambiguous word."

"Surely you do not understand Welsh?" said the doctor.

"I understand a little of it," I replied.

"Will you allow me to speak to you in Welsh?" said the doctor.

"Certainly," said I.

He spoke to me in Welsh and I replied.

"Ha, ha," said the landlady in English; "only think, doctor, of the gentleman understanding Welsh—we must mind what we say before him."

"And are you an Englishman?" said the doctor.

"I am," I replied.

"And how came you to learn it?"

"I am fond of languages," said I, "and studied Welsh at an early period."

"And you read Welsh poetry?"

"O yes."

"How were you enabled to master its difficulties?"

"Chiefly by going through Owen Pugh's version of 'Paradise Lost' twice, with the original by my side. He has introduced into that translation so many of the poetic terms of the old bards that after twice going through it, there was little in Welsh poetry that I could not make out with a little pondering."

"You pursued a very excellent plan, sir," said the doctor, "a very excellent plan indeed. Owen Pugh!"

"Owen Pugh! The last of your very great men," said I.

"You say right, sir," said the doctor. "He was indeed our last great man—Ultimus Romanorum. I have myself read his work, which he called Coll Gwynfa, the Loss of the Place of Bliss—an admirable translation, sir; highly poetical, and at the same time correct."

"Did you know him?" said I.

"I had not the honour of his acquaintance," said the doctor—"but sir, I am happy to say that I have made yours."

The landlady now began to talk to me about dinner, and presently went out to make preparations for that very important meal. I had a great deal of conversation with the doctor, whom I found a person of great and varied information, and one who had seen a vast deal of the world. He was giving me an account of an island in the West Indies, which he had visited, when a boy coming in whispered into his ear; whereupon, getting up he said: "Sir, I am called away. I am a country surgeon, and of course an accoucheur. There is a lady who lives at some distance, requiring my assistance. It is with grief I leave you so abruptly, but I hope that some time or other we shall meet again." Then making me an exceedingly profound bow, he left the room, followed by the boy.

I dined upstairs in a very handsome drawing-room communicating with a sleeping apartment. During dinner I was waited upon by the daughter of the landlady, a good-looking merry girl of twenty. After dinner I sat for some time thinking over the adventures of the day, then feeling rather lonely and not inclined

to retire to rest, I went down to the bar, where I found the landlady seated with her daughter. I sat down with them and we were soon in conversation. We spoke of Doctor Jones—the landlady said that he had his little eccentricities, but was an excellent and learned man. Speaking of herself she said, that she had three daughters, that the youngest was with her and that the two eldest kept the principal inn at Ruthyn. We occasionally spoke a little Welsh. At length the landlady said, "There is an Italian in the kitchen who can speak Welsh too. It 's odd the only two people not Welshmen I have ever known who could speak Welsh, for such you and he are, should be in my house at the same time."

"Dear me," said I; "I should like to see him."

"That you can easily do," said the girl; "I dare say he will be glad enough to come in if you invite him."

"Pray take my compliments to him," said I, "and tell him that I shall be glad of his company."

The girl went out and presently returned with the Italian. He was a short, thick, strongly-built fellow of about thirty-seven, with a swarthy face, raven-black hair, high forehead, and dark deep eyes, full of intelligence and great determination. He was dressed in a velveteen coat, with broad lappets, red waistcoat, velveteen breeches, buttoning a little way below the knee; white stockings apparently of lamb's-wool and highlows.

"Buona sera!" said I.

"Buona sera, signore!" said the Italian.

"Will you have a glass of brandy and water?" said I in English.

"I never refuse a good offer," said the Italian.

He sat down, and I ordered a glass of brandy and water for him and another for myself.

"Pray speak a little Italian to him," said the good landlady to me. "I have heard a great deal about the beauty of that language, and should like to hear it spoken."

"From the Lago di Como?" said I, trying to speak Italian.

"Si, signore! but how came you to think that I was from the Lake of Como?"

"Because," said I, "when I was a ragazzo I knew many from the Lake of Como, who dressed much like yourself. They wandered about the country with boxes on their backs and weather-glasses in their hands, but had their head-quarters at N. where I lived."

"Do you remember any of their names?" said the Italian.

"Giovanni Gestra and Luigi Pozzi," I replied.

"I have seen Giovanni Gestra myself," said the Italian, "and I have heard of Luigi Pozzi. Giovanni Gestra returned to the Lago—but no one knows what is become of Luigi Pozzi."

"The last time I saw him," said I, "was about eighteen years ago at Coruña, in Spain; he was then in a sad drooping condition, and said he bitterly repented ever quitting N."

"E con ragione," said the Italian, "for there is no place like N. for doing business in the whole world. I myself have sold seventy pounds' worth of weather-glasses at N. in one

day. One of our people is living there now, who has done bene, molto bene."

"That's Rossi," said I, "how is it that I did not mention him first? He is my excellent friend, and a finer cleverer fellow never lived nor a more honourable man. You may well say he has done well, for he is now the first jeweller in the place. The last time I was there I bought a diamond of him for my daughter Henrietta. Let us drink his health!"

"Willingly!" said the Italian. "He is the prince of the Milanese of England—the most successful of all, but I acknowledge the most deserving. Che viva."

"I wish he would write his life," said I; "a singular life it would be—he has been something besides a travelling merchant, and a jeweller. He was one of Buonaparte's soldiers and served in Spain, under Soult, along with John Gestra. He once told me that Soult was an old rascal, and stole all the fine pictures from the convents, at Salamanca. I believe he spoke with some degree of envy, for he is himself fond of pictures, and has dealt in them, and made hundreds by

them. I question whether if in Soult's place he would not have done the same. Well, however that may be, che viva."

Here the landlady interposed, observing that she wished we would now speak English, for that she had had quite enough of Italian; which she did not find near so pretty a language as she had expected.

"You must not judge of the sound of Italian from what proceeds from my mouth," said I. "It is not my native language. I have had little practice in it, and only speak it very imperfectly."

"Nor must you judge of Italian from what you have heard me speak," said the man of Como; "I am not good at Italian, for the Milanese speak amongst themselves a kind of jargon composed of many languages, and can only express themselves with difficulty in Italian. I have been doing my best to speak Italian but should be glad now to speak English, which comes to me much more glibly."

"Are there any books in your dialect,

or jergo, as I believe you call it?" said I.

"I believe there are a few," said the Italian.

"Do you know the word slandra?" said I.

"Who taught you that word?" said the Italian.

"Giovanni Gestra," said I—"he was always using it."

"Giovanni Gestra was a vulgar illiterate man," said the Italian; "had he not been so he would not have used it. It is a vulgar word; Rossi would not have used it."

"What is the meaning of it?" said the landlady eagerly.

"To roam about in a dissipated manner," said I.

"Something more," said the Italian. "It is considered a vulgar word even in jergo."

"You speak English remarkably well," said I; "have you been long in Britain?"

"I came over about four years ago," said the Italian.

"On your own account?" said I.

"Not exactly, signore; my brother who was

in business in Liverpool, wrote to me to come over and assist him. I did so, but soon left him, and took a shop for myself at Denbigh, where, however, I did not stay long. At present I travel for an Italian house in London, spending the summer in Wales and the winter in England."

"And what do you sell?" said I.

"Weather-glasses, signore—pictures and little trinkets, such as the country people like."

"Do you sell many weather-glasses in Wales?" said I.

"I do not, signore. The Welsh care not for weather-glasses; my principal customers for weather-glasses are the farmers of England."

"I am told that you can speak Welsh," said I; "is that true?"

"I have picked up a little of it, signore."

"He can speak it very well," said the landlady; and glad should I be, sir, to hear you and him speak Welsh together."

"So should I," said the daughter who was seated nigh us, "nothing would give me greater pleasure than to hear two who are not Welshmen speaking Welsh together."

"I would rather speak English," said the Italian; "I speak a little Welsh, when my business leads me amongst people who speak no other language, but I see no necessity for speaking Welsh here."

"It is a pity," said I, "that so beautiful a country as Italy should not be better governed."

"It is, signore," said the Italian; "but let us hope that a time will speedily come when she will be so."

"I don't see any chance of it," said I. "How will you proceed in order to bring about so desirable a result as the good government of Italy?"

"Why, signore, in the first place we must get rid of the Austrians."

"You will not find it an easy matter," said I, "to get rid of the Austrians; you tried to do so a little time ago, but miserably failed."

"True, signore; but the next time we try perhaps the French will help us."

"If the French help you to drive the Austrians from Italy," said I, "you must become their servants. It is true you had better be the

servants of the polished and chivalrous French, than of the brutal and barbarous Germans, but it is not pleasant to be a servant to anybody. However, I do not believe that you will ever get rid of the Austrians, even if the French assist you. The Pope for certain reasons of his own favours the Austrians, and will exert all the powers of priestcraft to keep them in Italy. Alas, alas, there is no hope for Italy! Italy, the most beautiful country in the world, the birth-place of the cleverest people, whose very pedlars can learn to speak Welsh, is not only enslaved, but destined always to remain enslaved."

"Do not say so, signore," said the Italian, with a kind of groan.

"But I do say so," said I, "and what is more, one whose shoe-strings were he alive, I should not be worthy to untie, one of your mighty ones, has said so. Did you ever hear of Vincenzio Filicaia?

"I believe I have, signore; did he not write a sonnet on Italy?"

"He did," said I; "would you like to hear it?"

"Very much, signore."

I repeated Filicaia's glorious sonnet on Italy, and then asked him if he understood it.

"Only in part, signore; for it is composed in old Tuscan, in which I am not much versed. I believe I should comprehend it better if you were to say it in English."

"Do say it in English," said the landlady and her daughter; "we should so like to hear it in English."

"I will repeat a translation," said I, "which I made when a boy, which though far from good, has, I believe, in it something of the spirit of the original:—

"O Italy! on whom dark Destiny
The dangerous gift of beauty did bestow,
From whence thou hast that ample dower of wo,
Which on thy front thou bear'st so visibly.
Would thou hadst beauty less or strength more high,
That more of fear, and less of love might show,
He who now blasts him in thy beauty's glow,
Or woos thee with a zeal that makes thee die;
Then down from Alp no more would torrents rage
Of armed men, nor Gallic coursers hot
In Po's ensanguin'd tide their thirst assuage;
Nor girt with iron, not thine own, I wot,
Wouldst thou the fight by hands of strangers wage,
Victress or vanquish'd slavery still thy lot."

CHAPTER XXV.

LACING-UP HIGHLOWS.—THE NATIVE VILLAGE.—GAME LEG.—CROPPIES LIE DOWN.—KEEPING FAITH.—PROCESSIONS.—CROPPIES GET UP.—DANIEL O'CONNELL.

I SLEPT in the chamber communicating with the room in which I had dined. The chamber was spacious and airy, the bed first-rate, and myself rather tired, so that no one will be surprised when I say that I had excellent rest. I got up, and after dressing myself went down. The morning was exceedingly brilliant. Going out I saw the Italian lacing up his highlows against a step. I saluted him, and asked him if he was about to depart.

"Yes, signore; I shall presently start for Denbigh."

"After breakfast I shall start for Bangor," said I.

"Do you propose to reach Bangor to-night, signore?"

"Yes," said I.

"Walking, signore?"

"Yes," said I; "I always walk in Wales."

"Then you will have rather a long walk, signore; for Bangor is thirty-four miles from here."

I asked him if he was married.

"No, signore; but my brother in Liverpool is."

"To an Italian?"

"No, signore; to a Welsh girl."

"And I suppose," said I, "you will follow his example by marrying one; perhaps that good-looking girl the landlady's daughter we were seated with last night?"

"No, signore; I shall not follow my brother's example. If ever I take a wife she shall be of my own village, in Como, whither I hope to return, as soon as I have picked up a few more pounds."

"Whether the Austrians are driven away or not?" said I.

"Whether the Austrians are driven away or not—for to my mind there is no country like Como, signore."

I ordered breakfast; whilst taking it in the room above I saw through the open window the Italian trudging forth on his journey, a huge box on his back, and a weather-glass in his hand—looking the exact image of one of those men his country people, whom forty years before I had known at N——. I thought of the course of time, sighed and felt a tear gather in my eye.

My breakfast concluded, I paid my bill, and after inquiring the way to Bangor, and bidding adieu to the kind landlady and her daughter, set out from Cerrig y Drudion. My course lay west, across a flat country, bounded in the far distance by the mighty hills I had seen on the preceding evening. After walking about a mile I overtook a man with a game leg, that is a leg, which either by nature or accident not being so long as its brother leg, had a patten attached to it, about five inches high, to enable it to do duty with the other—he was a fellow

with red shock hair and very red features, and was dressed in ragged coat and breeches and a hat which had lost part of its crown, and all its rim, so that even without a game leg he would have looked rather a queer figure. In his hand he carried a fiddle.

"Good morning to you," said I.

"A good marning to your hanner, a merry afternoon and a roaring joyous evening—that is the worst luck I wish to ye."

"Are you a native of these parts?" said I.

"Not exactly your hanner—I am a native of the city of Dublin, or, what's all the same thing, of the village of Donnybrook which is close by it."

"A celebrated place," said I.

"Your hanner may say that; all the world has heard of Donnybrook, owing to the humours of its fair. Many is the merry tune I have played to the boys at that fair."

"You are a professor of music I suppose?"

"And not a very bad one as your hanner will say if you allow me to play you a tune."

"Can you play Croppies Lie Down?"

"I cannot your hanner, my fingers never learnt to play such a blackguard tune; but if ye wish to hear Croppies Get Up I can oblige ye."

"You are a Roman Catholic, I suppose?"

"I am nat your hanner—I am a Catholic to the backbone, just like my father before me. Come, your hanner, shall I play ye Croppies Get Up?"

"No," said I; "it's a tune that doesn't please my ears. If, however, you choose to play Croppies Lie Down, I'll give you a shilling."

"Your hanner will give me a shilling?"

"Yes," said I; "if you play Croppies Lie Down: but you know you cannot play it, your fingers never learned the tune."

"They never did, your hanner; but they have heard it played of ould by the blackguard Orange fiddlers of Dublin on the first of July, when the Protestant boys used to walk round Willie's statue on College Green—so if your hanner gives me the shilling they may perhaps bring out something like it."

"Very good," said I; "begin!"

"But, your hanner, what shall we do for the words? though my fingers may remember the tune my tongue does not remember the words—that is unless . . ."

"I give another shilling," said I; "but never mind you the words; I know the words, and will repeat them."

"And your hanner will give me a shilling?"

"If you play the tune," said I.

"Hanner bright, your hanner?"

"Honour bright," said I.

Thereupon the fiddler taking his bow and shouldering his fiddle, struck up in first-rate style the glorious tune, which I had so often heard with rapture in the days of my boyhood in the barrack yard of Clonmel; whilst I walking by his side as he stumped along, caused the welkin to resound with the words, which were the delight of the young gentlemen of the Protestant academy of that beautiful old town.

"I never heard those words before," said the fiddler, after I had finished the first stanza.

"Get on with you," said I.

"Regular Orange words!" said the fiddler, on my finishing the second stanza.

"Do you choose to get on?" said I.

"More blackguard Orange words I never heard!" cried the fiddler, on my coming to the conclusion of the third stanza. "Divil a bit farther will I play; at any rate till I get the shilling."

"Here it is for you," said I; "the song is ended and of course the tune."

"Thank your hanner," said the fiddler, taking the money, "your hanner has kept your word with me, which is more than I thought your hanner would. And now your hanner let me ask ye why did your hanner wish for that tune, which is not only a blackguard one but quite out of date; and where did your hanner get the words?"

"I used to hear the tune in my boyish days," said I, "and wished to hear it again, for though you call it a blackguard tune, it is the sweetest and most noble air that Ireland the land of music has ever produced. As for the words

never mind where I got them ; they are violent enough but not half so violent as the words of some of the songs made against the Irish Protestants by the priests."

"Your hanner is an Orange man," I see. "Well, your hanner, the Orange is now in the kennel, and the Croppies have it all their own way."

"And perhaps," said I, "before I die the Orange will be out of the kennel and the Croppies in, even as they were in my young days."

"Who knows, your hanner? and who knows that I may not play the ould tune round Willie's image in College Green, even as I used some twenty-seven years ago?"

"O then you have been an Orange fiddler?"

"I have, your hanner. And now as your hanner has behaved like a gentleman to me I will tell ye all my history. I was born in the city of Dublin, that is in the village of Donnybrook, as I tould your hanner before. It was to the trade of bricklaying I was bred, and bricklaying I followed till at last, getting my leg smashed, not by falling off the ladder, but by a

row in the fair, I was obliged to give it up, for how could I run up the ladder with a patten on my foot, which they put on to make my broken leg as long as the other. Well, your hanner; being obliged to give up my bricklaying I took to fiddling, to which I had always a natural inclination, and played about the streets, and at fairs, and wakes, and weddings. At length some Orange men getting acquainted with me, and liking my style of playing, invited me to their lodge, where they gave me to drink, and tould me that if I would change my religion and join them, and play their tunes, they would make it answer my purpose. Well, your hanner, without much stickling I gave up my Popery, joined the Orange lodge, learned the Orange tunes, and became a regular Protestant boy, and truly the Orange men kept their word, and made it answer my purpose. O the meat and drink I got, and the money I made by playing at the Orange lodges and before the processions when the Orange men paraded the streets with their Orange colours. And O, what a day for me was the glorious first of July when with my

whole body covered with Orange ribbons I fiddled Croppies Lie Down—Boyne Water, and the Protestant Boys before the procession which walked round Willie's figure on horseback in College Green, the man and horse all ablaze with Orange colours. But nothing lasts under the sun, as your hanner knows; Orangeism began to go down; the Government scowled at it, and at last passed a law preventing the Protestant boys dressing up the figure on the first of July, and walking round it. That was the death-blow of the Orange party, your hanner; they never recovered it, but began to despond and dwindle, and I with them; for there was scarcely any demand for Orange tunes. Then Dan O'Connell arose with his emancipation and repale cries, and then instead of Orange processions and walkings, there were Papist processions and mobs, which made me afraid to stir out, lest knowing me for an Orange fiddler, they should break my head, as the boys broke my leg at Donnybrook fair. At length some of the repalers and emancipators knowing that I was a first-rate hand at fiddling came

to me, and tould me, that if I would give over playing Croppies Lie Down and other Orange tunes, and would play Croppies Get Up, and what not, and become a Catholic and a repaler, and an emancipator, they would make a man of me—so as my Orange trade was gone, and I was half-starved, I consinted, not however till they had introduced me to Daniel O'Connell, who called me a cridit to my country, and the Irish Horpheus, and promised me a sovereign if I would consint to join the cause, as he called it. Well, your hanner, I joined with the cause and became a Papist, I mane a Catholic once more, and went at the head of processions covered all over with green ribbons playing Croppies Get Up, Granny Whale, and the like. But, your hanner; though I went the whole hog with the repalers and emancipators, they did not make their words good by making a man of me. Scant and sparing were they in the mate and drink and yet more sparing in the money, and Daniel O'Connell never gave me the sovereign which he promised me. No, your hanner, though I played Croppies

Get Up, till my fingers ached, as I stumped before him and his mobs and processions, he never gave me the sovereign: unlike your hanner who gave me the shilling ye promised me for playing Croppies Lie Down, Daniel O'Connell never gave me the sovereign he promised me for playing Croppies Get Up. Och, your hanner, I often wished the ould Orange days were back again. However as I could do no better I continued going the whole hog with the emancipators and repalers and Dan O'Connell; I went the whole animal with them till they had got emancipation; and I went the whole animal with them till they had nearly got repale —when all of a sudden they let the whole thing drop—Dan and his party having frighted the Government out of its seven senses, and gotten all they thought they could get, in money and places, which was all they wanted, let the whole hullabaloo drop, and of course myself, who formed part of it. I went to those who had persuaded me to give up my Orange tunes, and to play Papist ones, begging them to give me work; but they tould me very civilly that they

had no farther occasion for my services. I went to Daniel O'Connell reminding him of the sovereign he had promised me, and offering if he gave it me to play Croppies Get Up under the nose of the lord-lieutenant himself; but he tould me that he had not time to attend to me, and when I persisted, bade me go to the Divil and shake myself. Well, your hanner, seeing no prospect for myself in my own country, and having incurred some little debts, for which I feared to be arrested, I came over to England and Wales, where with little content and satisfaction I have passed seven years."

"Well," said I; "thank you for your history —farewell."

"Stap, your hanner; does your hanner think that the Orange will ever be out of the kennel, and that the Orange boys will ever walk round the brass man and horse in College Green as they did of ould?"

"Who knows?" said I. "But suppose all that were to happen, what would it signify to you?"

"Why then Divil be in my patten if I would

not go back to Donnybrook and Dublin, hoist the Orange cockade, and become as good an Orange boy as ever."

"What," said I, "and give up Popery for the second time?"

"I would, your hanner; and why not? for in spite of what I have heard Father Toban say, I am by no means certain that all Protestants will be damned."

"Farewell," said I.

"Farewell, your hanner, and long life and prosperity to you! God bless your hanner and your Orange face. Ah, the Orange boys are the boys for keeping faith. They never served me as Dan O'Connell and his dirty gang of repalers and emancipators did. Farewell, your hanner, once more; and here's another scratch of the illigant tune your hanner is so fond of, to cheer up your hanner's ears upon your way."

And long after I had left him I could hear him playing on his fiddle in first-rate style the beautiful tune of "Down, down, Croppies Lie Down."

CHAPTER XXVI.

CEINIOG MAWR.—PENTRE VOELAS.—THE OLD CONWAY.—STUPENDOUS PASS.—THE GWEDIR FAMILY.—CAPEL CURIG.—THE TWO CHILDREN.—BREAD.—WONDERFUL ECHO.—TREMENDOUS WALKER.

I WALKED on briskly over a flat uninteresting country, and in about an hour's time came in front of a large stone house. It stood near the road, on the left-hand side, with a pond and pleasant trees before it, and a number of corn-stacks behind. It had something the appearance of an inn, but displayed no sign. As I was standing looking at it, a man with the look of a labourer, and with a dog by his side, came out of the house and advanced towards me.

"What is the name of this place?" said I to him in English as he drew nigh.

"Sir," said the man, "the name of the house is Ceiniog Mawr."

"Is it an inn?" said I.

"Not now, sir; but some years ago it was an inn, and a very large one at which coaches used to stop; at present it is occupied by an amaethwr—that is a farmer, sir."

"Ceiniog Mawr means a great penny," said I, "why is it called by that name?"

"I have heard, sir, that before it was an inn it was a very considerable place, namely a royal mint at which pennies were made, and on that account it was called Ceiniog Mawr."

I was subsequently told that the name of this place was Cernioge Mawr. If such be the real name the legend about the mint falls to the ground, Cernioge having nothing to do with pence. Cern in Welsh means a jaw. Perhaps the true name of the house is Corniawg, which interpreted is a place with plenty of turrets or chimneys. A mile or two further the ground began to rise, and I came to a small village at the entrance of which was a water-wheel—near the village was a gentleman's seat almost surrounded by groves. After I had passed through the village, seeing a woman seated by the

roadside knitting, I asked her in English its name. Finding she had no Saesneg I repeated the question in Welsh, whereupon she told me that it was called Pentre Voelas.

"And whom does the 'Plas' belong to yonder amongst the groves?" said I.

"It belongs to Mr. Wynn, sir, and so does the village and a great deal of the land about here. A very good gentleman is Mr. Wynn, sir; he is very kind to his tenants and a very good lady is Mrs. Wynn, sir; in the winter she gives much soup to the poor."

After leaving the village of Pentre Voelas I soon found myself in a wild hilly region. I crossed a bridge over a river which brawling and tumbling amidst rocks shaped its course to the north-east. As I proceeded the country became more and more wild; there were dingles and hollows in abundance, and fantastic-looking [illegible] some of which were bare and others clad with trees of various kinds. Came to a [illegible] at a cavity dug in a high bank on the left-hand side of the road, and fenced by rude stone work on either side; the well was about ten inches a

diameter, and as many deep. Water oozing from the bank upon a slanting tile fastened into the earth fell into it. After damming up the end of the tile with my hand and drinking some delicious water I passed on and presently arrived at a cottage just inside the door of which sat a good-looking middle-aged woman engaged in knitting, the general occupation of Welsh females.

"Good day," said I to her in Welsh. "Fine weather."

"In truth, sir, it is fine weather for the harvest."

"Are you alone in the house?"

"I am, sir, my husband has gone to his labour."

"Have you any children?"

"Two, sir; but they are out at service."

"What is the name of this place?"

"Pant Paddock, sir."

"Do you get your water from the little well yonder?"

"We do sir, and good water it is."

"I have drunk of it."

"Much good may what you have drunk do you, sir!"

"What is the name of the river near here?"

"It is called the Conway, sir."

"Dear me; is that river the Conway?"

"You have heard of it, sir?"

"Heard of it! it is one of the famous rivers of the world. The poets are very fond of it—one of the great poets of my country calls it the old Conway."

"Is one river older than another, sir?"

"That's a shrewd question. Can you read?"

"I can, sir."

"Have you any books?"

"I have the Bible, sir."

"Will you show it me?"

"Willingly, sir."

Then getting up she took a book from a shelf and handed it to me at the same time begging me to enter the house and sit down. I declined, and she again took her seat and resumed her occupation. On opening the book the first words which met my eye were "Gad i mi fyned trwy dy dir!" Let me go through your country. Numb. xx. 22.

"I may say these words," said I, pointing to the passage. "Let me go through your country."

"No one will hinder you, sir, for you seem a civil gentleman."

"No one has hindered me hitherto. Wherever I have been in Wales I have experienced nothing but kindness and hospitality, and when I return to my own country I will say so."

"What country is yours, sir?"

"England. Did you not know that by my tongue?"

"I did not, sir. I knew by your tongue that you were not from our parts—but I did not know that you were an Englishman. I took you for a Cumro of the south country."

Returning the kind woman her book, and bidding her farewell I departed, and proceeded some miles through a truly magnificent country of wood, rock, and mountain. At length I came to a steep mountain gorge down which the road ran nearly due north, the Conway to the left running with great noise parallel with the road,

amongst broken rocks, which chafed it into foam. I was now amidst stupendous hills, whose paps, peaks, and pinnacles seemed to rise to the very heaven. An immense mountain on the right side of the road particularly struck my attention, and on inquiring of a man breaking stones by the roadside I learned that it was called Dinas Mawr or the large citadel, perhaps from a fort having been built upon it to defend the pass in the old British times. Coming to the bottom of the pass I crossed over by an ancient bridge and passing through a small town found myself in a beautiful valley with majestic hills, on either side. This was the Dyffryn Conway, the celebrated Vale of Conway, to which in the summer time fashionable gentry from all parts of Britain resort for shade and relaxation. When about midway down the valley I turned to the west up one of the grandest passes in the world, having two immense door-posts of rock at the entrance, the northern one probably rising to the altitude of nine hundred feet. On the southern side of this pass near the entrance were neat dwellings for the accommodation of

visitors with cool apartments on the ground-floor with large windows, looking towards the precipitous side of the mighty northern hill; within them I observed tables, and books, and young men, probably English collegians, seated at study.

After I had proceeded some way up the pass down which a small river ran, a woman who was standing on the right-hand side of the way, seemingly on the look-out, begged me in broken English to step aside and look at the fall.

"You mean a waterfall I suppose?" said I.

"Yes, sir."

"And how do you call it?" said I.

"The Fall of the Swallow, sir."

"And in Welsh?" said I.

"Rhaiadr y Wennol, sir."

"And what is the name of the river?" said I.

"We call the river the Lygwy, sir."

I told the woman I would go, whereupon she conducted me through a gate on the right-hand side and down a path, overhung with trees to a rock projecting into the river. The Fall of

the Swallow is not a majestic single fall, but a succession of small ones. First there are a number of little foaming torrents, bursting through rocks about twenty yards above the promontory, on which I stood. Then come two beautiful rolls of white water, dashing into a pool a little way above the promontory; then there is a swirl of water round its corner into a pool below on its right, black as death and seemingly of great depth; then a rush through a very narrow outlet into another pool, from which the water clamours away down the glen. Such is the Rhaiadr y Wennol, or Swallow Fall; called so from the rapidity with which the waters rush and skip along.

On asking the woman on whose property the fall was, she informed me that it was on the property of the Gwedir family. The name of Gwedir brought to my mind the "History of the Gwedir Family," a rare and curious book which I had read in my boyhood and which was written by the representative of that family a certain Sir John Wynne about the beginning of the seventeenth century. It gives an

account of the fortunes of the family, from its earliest rise: but more particularly after it had emigrated, in order to avoid bad neighbours, from a fair and fertile district into rugged Snowdonia, where it found anything but the repose it came in quest of. The book which is written in bold graphic English flings considerable light on the state of society in Wales, in the time of the Tudors, a truly deplorable state, as the book is full of accounts of feuds, petty but desperate skirmishes, and revengeful murders. To many of the domestic sagas, or histories of ancient Icelandic families, from the character of the events which it describes and also from the manner in which it describes them, the "History of the Gwedir Family," by Sir John Wynne bears a striking resemblance.

After giving the woman sixpence I left the fall, and proceeded on my way. I presently crossed a bridge under which ran the river of the fall, and was soon in a wide valley on each side of which were lofty hills dotted with wood, and at the top of which stood a mighty mountain bare and precipitous with two paps like

these of Pindus opposite Janina, but somewhat sharper. It was a region of fairy beauty and of wild grandeur. Meeting an old bleared-eyed farmer I inquired the name of the mountain and learned that it was called Moel Siabod or Shabod. Shortly after leaving him, I turned from the road to inspect a monticle which appeared to me to have something of the appearance of a burial heap. It stood in a green meadow by the river which ran down the valley on the left. Whether it was a grave hill or a natural monticle, I will not say ; but standing in the fair meadow, the rivulet murmuring beside it, and the old mountain looking down upon it, I thought it looked a very meet resting-place for an old Celtic king.

Turning round the northern side of the mighty Siabod I soon reached the village of Capel Curig, standing in a valley between two hills, the easternmost of which is the aforesaid Moel Siabod. Having walked now twenty miles in a broiling day I thought it high time to take some refreshment, and inquired the way to the inn. The inn, or rather the hotel, for it was a very magnificent edifice, stood at the

entrance of a pass leading to Snowdon, on the southern side of the valley in a totally different direction from the road leading to Bangor, to which place I was bound. There I dined in a grand saloon amidst a great deal of fashionable company, who probably conceiving from my heated and dusty appearance, that I was some poor fellow travelling on foot from motives of economy, surveyed me with looks of the most supercilious disdain, which, however, neither deprived me of my appetite nor operated uncomfortably on my feelings.

My dinner finished, I paid my bill and having sauntered a little about the hotel garden, which is situated on the border of a small lake and from which through the vista of the pass Snowdon may be seen towering in majesty at the distance of about six miles, I started for Bangor, which is fourteen miles from Capel Curig.

The road to Bangor from Capel Curig is almost due west. An hour's walking brought me to a bleak moor, extending for a long way amidst wild sterile hills.

The first of a chain on the left was a huge lumpy hill with a precipice towards the road probably three hundred feet high. When I had come nearly parallel with the commencement of this precipice, I saw on the left-hand side of the road two children looking over a low wall behind which at a little distance stood a wretched hovel. On coming up I stopped and looked at them: they were a boy and a girl; the first about twelve, the latter a year or two younger; both wretchedly dressed and looking very sickly.

"Have you any English?" said I, addressing the boy in Welsh.

"Dim gair," said the boy; "not a word; there is no Saesneg near here."

"What is the name of this place?"

"The name of our house is Helyg."

"And what is the name of that hill?" said I, pointing to the hill of the precipice.

"Allt y Gôg—the high place of the cuckoo."

"Have you a father and mother?"

"We have."

"Are they in the house?"

"They are gone to Capel Curig."

"And they left you alone?"

"They did. With the cat and the trin-wire."

"Do your father and mother make wirework?"

"They do. They live by making it."

"What is the wire-work for?"

"It is for hedges to fence the fields with."

"Do you help your father and mother?"

"We do; as far as we can."

"You both look unwell."

"We have lately had the cryd" (ague).

"Is there much cryd about here?"

"Plenty."

"Do you live well?"

"When we have bread we live well."

"If I give you a penny will you bring me some water?"

"We will; whether you give us the penny or not. Come, sister, let us go and fetch the gentleman water."

They ran into the house and presently returned, the girl bearing a pan of water. After I had drunk I gave each of the children a penny, and received in return from each a diolch or thanks.

"Can either of you read?"

"Neither one nor the other."

"Can your father and mother read?"

"My father cannot, my mother can a little."

"Are there books in the house?"

"There are not."

"No Bible?"

"There is no book at all."

"Do you go to church?"

"We do not."

"To chapel?"

"In fine weather."

"Are you happy?"

"When there is bread in the house and no cryd we are all happy."

"Farewell to you, children."

"Farewell to you, gentleman!" exclaimed both.

"I have learnt something," said I, "of Welsh cottage life and feeling from that poor sickly child."

I had passed the first and second of the hills which stood on the left, and a huge long mountain on the right which confronted both

when a young man came down from a gulley on my left hand, and proceeded in the same direction as myself. He was dressed in a blue coat and corduroy trowsers and appeared to be of a condition a little above that of a labourer. He shook his head and scowled when I spoke to him in English, but smiled on my speaking Welsh and said: "Ah, you speak Cumraeg: I thought no Sais could speak Cumraeg." I asked him if he was going far.

"About four miles," he replied.

"On the Bangor road?"

"Yes," said he; "down the Bangor road."

I learned that he was a carpenter, and that he had been up the gulley to see an acquaintance —perhaps a sweetheart. We passed a lake on our right which he told me was called Llyn Ogwen, and that it abounded with fish. He was very amusing and expressed great delight at having found an Englishman who could speak Welsh. "It will be a thing to talk of," said he, "for the rest of my life." He entered two or three cottages by the side of the road, and each time as he came out I heard him say: "I

am with a Sais, who can speak Cumraeg." At length we came to a gloomy-looking valley trending due north; down this valley the road ran having an enormous wall of rocks on its right and a precipitous hollow on the left, beyond which was a wall equally high as the other one. When we had proceeded some way down the road my guide said: "You shall now hear a wonderful echo," and shouting "taw, taw," the rocks replied in a manner something like the baying of hounds. "Hark to the dogs!" exclaimed my companion. "This pass is called Nant yr ieuanc gwn, the pass of the young dogs, because when one shouts it answers with a noise resembling the crying of hounds."

The sun was setting when we came to a small village at the bottom of the pass. I asked my companion its name. "Ty yn y maes," he replied, adding as he stopped before a small cottage that he was going no farther, as he dwelt there.

"Is there a public-house here?" said I.

"There is," he replied, "you will find one a little farther up on the right hand."

"Come, and take some ale," said I.

"No," said he.

"Why not?" I demanded.

"I am a teetotaller," he replied.

"Indeed," said I, and having shaken him by the hand, thanked him for his company and bidding him farewell, went on. He was the first person I had ever met of the fraternity to which he belonged, who did not endeavour to make a parade of his abstinence and self-denial.

After drinking some tolerably good ale in the public-house I again started. As I left the village a clock struck eight. The evening was delightfully cool; but it soon became nearly dark. I passed under high rocks, by houses and by groves, in which nightingales were singing, to listen to whose entrancing melody I more than once stopped. On coming to a town, lighted up and thronged with people, I asked one of a group of young fellows its name.

"Bethesda," he replied.

"A scriptural name," said I.

"Is it?" said he; "well, if its name is scrip-

tural the manners of its people are by no means so."

A little way beyond the town a man came out of a cottage and walked beside me. He had a basket in his hand. I quickened my pace; but he was a tremendous walker, and kept up with me. On we went side by side for more than a mile without speaking a word. At length putting out my legs in genuine Barclay fashion I got before him about ten yards, then turning round laughed and spoke to him in English. He too laughed and spoke, but in Welsh. We now went on like brothers, conversing, but always walking at great speed. I learned from him that he was a market gardener living at Bangor, and that Bangor was three miles off. On the stars shining out we began to talk about them.

Pointing to Charles's wain I said, "A good star for travellers."

Whereupon pointing to the North star, he said:

"I forwyr da iawn—a good star for mariners."

We passed a large house on our left.

"Who lives there?" said I.

"Mr. Smith," he replied. "It is called Plas Newydd; milltir genom etto—we have yet another mile."

In ten minutes we were at Bangor. I asked him where the Albion Hotel was.

"I will show it you," said he, and so he did.

As we came under it I heard the voice of my wife, for she, standing on a balcony and distinguishing me by the lamplight, called out. I shook hands with the kind six-mile-an-hour market gardener, and going into the inn found my wife and daughter, who rejoiced to see me. We presently had tea.

CHAPTER XXVII.

BANGOR.—EDMUND PRICE.—THE BRIDGES.—BOOKSELLING.—FUTURE POPE.—WILD IRISH.—SOUTHEY.

BANGOR is seated on the spurs of certain high hills near the Menai, a strait separating Mona or Anglesey from Caernarvonshire. It was once a place of Druidical worship, of which fact, even without the testimony of history and tradition the name which signifies "upper circle" would be sufficient evidence. On the decay of Druidism a town sprang up on the site and in the neighbourhood of the "upper circle," in which in the sixth century a convent or university was founded by Deiniol, who eventually became Bishop of Bangor. This Deiniol was the son of Deiniol Vawr, a zealous Christian prince who founded the convent of Bangor Is Coed, or Ban-

gor beneath the wood in Flintshire, which was destroyed and its inmates almost to a man put to the sword by Ethelbert a Saxon king, and his barbarian followers at the instigation of the monk Austin, who hated the brethren because they refused to acknowledge the authority of the Pope, whose delegate he was in Britain. There were in all three Bangors; the one at Is Coed, another in Powis, and this Caernarvonshire Bangor, which was generally termed Bangor Vawr or Bangor the great. The two first Bangors have fallen into utter decay, but Bangor Vawr is still a bishop's see, boasts of a small but venerable cathedral, and contains a population of above eight thousand souls.

Two very remarkable men have at different periods conferred a kind of lustre upon Bangor by residing in it, Taliesin in the old, and Edmund Price in comparatively modern time. Both of them were poets. Taliesin flourished about the end of the fifth century, and for the sublimity of his verses was for many centuries called by his countrymen the Bardic King. Amongst his pieces is one generally termed

"The Prophecy of Taliesin," which announced long before it happened, the entire subjugation of Britain by the Saxons, and which is perhaps one of the most stirring pieces of poetry ever produced. Edmund Price flourished during the time of Elizabeth. He was archdeacon of Merionethshire, but occasionally resided at Bangor for the benefit of his health. Besides being one of the best Welsh poets of his age he was a man of extraordinary learning, possessing a thorough knowledge of no less than eight languages.

The greater part of his compositions, however clever and elegant, are, it must be confessed, such as do little credit to the pen of an ecclesiastic, being bitter poignant satires, which were the cause of much pain and misery to individuals; one of his works, however, is not only of a kind quite consistent with his sacred calling, but has been a source of considerable blessing. To him the Cambrian Church is indebted for the version of the Psalms, which for the last two centuries it has been in the habit of using. Previous to the version of the Archdeacon a

translation of the Psalms had been made into Welsh by William Middleton, an officer in the naval service of Queen Elizabeth, in the four-and-twenty alliterative measures of the ancient bards. It was elegant and even faithful, but far beyond the comprehension of people in general, and consequently by no means fitted for the use of churches, though intended for that purpose by the author, a sincere Christian, though a warrior. Avoiding the error into which his predecessor had fallen, the Archdeacon made use of a measure intelligible to people of every degree, in which alliteration is not observed, and which is called by the Welsh y mesur cyffredin, or the common measure. His opinion of the four-and-twenty measures the Archdeacon has given to the world in four cowydd lines to the following effect:

> "I've read the master-pieces great
> Of languages no less than eight,
> But ne'er have found a woof of song
> So strict as that of Cambria's tongue."

After breakfast on the morning subsequent to my arrival, Henrietta and I roamed about

the town, and then proceeded to view the bridges which lead over the strait to Anglesey. One, for common traffic, is a most beautiful suspension bridge completed in 1820, the result of the mental and manual labours of the ingenious Telford; the other is a tubular rail-road bridge, a wonderful structure, no doubt, but anything but graceful. We remained for some time on the first bridge, admiring the scenery, and were not a little delighted, as we stood leaning over the principal arch, to see a proud vessel pass beneath us at full sail.

Satiated with gazing we passed into Anglesey, and making our way to the tubular bridge, which is to the west of the suspension one, entered one of its passages and returned to the main land.

The air was exceedingly hot and sultry, and on coming to a stone bench, beneath a shady wall, we both sat down, panting, on one end of it; as we were resting ourselves, a shabby-looking man with a bundle of books came and seated himself at the other end, placing his bundle beside him; then taking out from his pocket a

dirty red handkerchief, he wiped his face, which was bathed in perspiration, and ejaculated: "By Jasus it is blazing hot!"

"Very hot, my friend," said I; "have you travelled far to day?"

"I have not, your hanner; I have been just walking about the dirty town trying to sell my books."

"Have you been successful?"

"I have not, your hanner; only three pence have I taken this blessed day."

"What do your books treat of?"

"Why that is more than I can tell your hanner; my trade is to sell the books not to read them. Would your hanner like to look at them?"

"O dear no," said I; "I have long been tired of books; I have had enough of them."

"I dare say, your hanner; from the state of your hanner's eyes I should say as much; they look so weak—picking up learning has ruined your hanner's sight."

"May I ask," said I, "from what country you are?"

"Sure your hanner may; and it is a civil answer you will get from Michael Sullivan. It is from ould Ireland I am, from Castlebar in the county Mayo."

"And how came you into Wales?"

"From the hope of bettering my condition, your hanner, and a foolish hope it was."

"You have not bettered your condition, then?"

"I have not, your hanner; for I suffer quite as much hunger and thirst as ever I did in ould Ireland."

"Did you sell books in Ireland?"

"I did nat, your hanner; I made buttons and clothes—that is I pieced them. I was several trades in ould Ireland, your hanner; but none of them answering, I came over here."

"Where you commenced bookselling?" said I.

"I did nat, your hanner. I first sold laces, and then I sold loocifers, and then something else; I have followed several trades in Wales, your hanner; at last I got into the book-selling trade, in which I now am."

"And it answers, I suppose, as badly as the others?"

"Just as badly, your hanner; divil a bit better."

"I suppose you never beg?"

"Your hanner may say that; I was always too proud to beg. It is begging I laves to the wife I have."

"Then you have a wife?"

"I have, your hanner; and a daughter, too; and a good wife and daughter they are. What would become of me without them I do not know."

"Have you been long in Wales?"

"Not very long, your hanner; only about twenty years."

"Do you travel much about?"

"All over North Wales, your hanner; to say nothing of the southern country."

"I suppose you speak Welsh?"

"Not a word, your hanner. The Welsh speak their language so fast, that divil a word could I ever contrive to pick up."

"Do you speak Irish?"

"I do, your hanner; that is when people spake to me in it."

I spoke to him in Irish; after a little discourse he said in English:

"I see your hanner is a Munster man. Ah! all the learned men comes from Munster. Father Toban comes from Munster."

"I have heard of him once or twice before," said I.

"I dare say your hanner has. Everyone has heard of Father Toban; the greatest scholar in the world, who they say stands a better chance of being made Pope, some day or other, than any saggart in Ireland."

"Will you take sixpence?"

"I will, your hanner; if your hanner offers it; but I never beg; I leave that kind of work to my wife and daughter as I said before."

After giving him the sixpence, which he received with a lazy "thank your hanner," I got up, and followed by my daughter returned to the town.

Henrietta went to the inn, and I again

strolled about the town. As I was standing in the middle of one of the busiest streets I suddenly heard a loud and dissonant gabbling, and glancing around beheld a number of wild-looking people, male and female. Wild looked the men, yet wilder the women. The men were very lightly clad, and were all barefooted and bareheaded; they carried stout sticks in their hands. The women were barefooted too, but had for the most part head-dresses; their garments consisted of blue cloaks and striped gingham gowns. All the females had common tin articles in their hands which they offered for sale with violent gestures to the people in the streets, as they walked along, occasionally darting into the shops, from which, however, they were almost invariably speedily ejected by the startled proprietors, with looks of disgust and almost horror. Two ragged, red-haired lads led a gaunt pony, drawing a creaking cart, stored with the same kind of articles of tin, which the women bore. Poorly clad, dusty and soiled as they were, they all walked with a free, independent, and almost graceful carriage.

"Are those people from Ireland?" said I to a decent-looking man seemingly a mechanic, who stood near me, and was also looking at them, but with anything but admiration.

"I am sorry to say they are, sir;" said the man, who from his accent was evidently an Irishman, "for they are a disgrace to their country."

I did not exactly think so. I thought that in many respects they were fine specimens of humanity.

"Every one of those wild fellows," said I to myself, "is worth a dozen of the poor mean-spirited book-tramper I have lately been discoursing with."

In the afternoon I again passed over into Anglesey, but this time not by the bridge but by the ferry on the north-east of Bangor, intending to go to Beaumaris, about two or three miles distant; an excellent road, on the left side of which is a high bank fringed with dwarf oaks, and on the right the Menai strait, leads to it. Beaumaris is at present a watering-place. On one side of it, close upon the sea stand the ruins

of an immense castle, once a Norman stronghold, but built on the site of a palace belonging to the ancient kings of North Wales, and a favourite residence of the celebrated Owain Gwynedd, the father of the yet more celebrated Madoc, the original discoverer of America. I proceeded at once to the castle, and clambering to the top of one of the turrets, looked upon Beaumaris Bay, and the noble rocky coast of the mainland to the south-east beyond it, the most remarkable object of which is the gigantic Penman Mawr, which interpreted is "the great head-stone," the termination of a range of craggy hills descending from the Snowdon mountains.

"What a bay!" said I, "for beauty it is superior to the far-famed one of Naples. A proper place for the keels to start from, which unguided by the compass found their way over the mighty and mysterious Western Ocean."

I repeated all the Bardic lines I could remember connected with Madoc's expedition, and likewise many from the Madoc of Southey, not the least of Britain's four great latter poets, decidedly her best prose writer, and probably

the purest and most noble character to which she has ever given birth; and then, after a long, lingering look, descended from my altitude, and returned, not by the ferry, but by the suspension bridge to the main land.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

ROBERT LLEIAF.—PROPHETIC ENGLYN.—THE SECOND SIGHT.—DUNCAN CAMPBELL.—NIAL'S SAGA.—FAMILY OF NIAL.—GUNNAR.—THE AVENGER.

Av i dir Môn, cr dwr Menai,
Tros y traeth, ond aros trai.

"I will go to the land of Mona, notwithstanding the water of the Menai, across the sand, without waiting for the ebb."

So sang a bard about two hundred and forty years ago, who styled himself Robert Lleiaf, or the least of the Roberts. The meaning of the couplet has always been considered to be and doubtless is, that a time would come when a bridge would be built across the Menai, over which one might pass with safety and comfort, without waiting till the ebb was sufficiently low to permit people to pass over the traeth, or sand, which, from ages the most remote, had been used as the means of communication between the main land and the Isle of Mona or Anglesey. Ground-

ing their hopes upon that couplet people were continually expecting to see a bridge across the Menai: more than two hundred years, however, elapsed before the expectation was fulfilled by the mighty Telford flinging over the strait an iron suspension bridge, which, for grace and beauty, has perhaps no rival in Europe.

The couplet is a remarkable one. In the time of its author there was nobody in Britain capable of building a bridge, which could have stood against the tremendous surges which occasionally vex the Menai; yet the couplet gives intimation that a bridge over the Menai there would be, which clearly argues a remarkable foresight in the author, a feeling that a time would at length arrive when the power of science would be so far advanced, that men would be able to bridge over the terrible strait. The length of time which intervened between the composition of the couplet and the fulfilment of the promise, shows that a bridge over the Menai was no pont y meibion, no children's bridge, nor a work for common men. O, surely Lleiaf was a man of great foresight!

A man of great foresight, but nothing more; he foretold a bridge over the Menai, when no one could have built one, a bridge over which people could pass, aye, and carts and horses; we will allow him the credit of foretelling such a bridge; and when Telford's bridge was flung over the Menai, Lleiaf's couplet was verified. But since Telford's another bridge has been built over the Menai, which enables things to pass which the bard certainly never dreamt of. He never hinted at a bridge over which thundering trains would dash, if required, at the rate of fifty miles an hour; he never hinted at steam travelling, or a railroad bridge, and the second bridge over the Menai is one.

That Lleiaf was a man of remarkable foresight cannot be denied, but there are no grounds which entitle him to be considered a possessor of the second sight. He foretold a bridge, but not a railroad bridge; had he foretold a railroad bridge, or hinted at the marvels of steam, his claim to the second sight would have been incontestable.

What a triumph for Wales; what a triumph for bardism, if Lleiaf had ever written an

englyn, or couplet, in which not a bridge for common traffic, but a railroad bridge over the Menai was hinted at, and steam travelling distinctly foretold! Well, though Lleiaf did not write it, there exists in the Welsh language an englyn, almost as old as Lleiaf's time, in which steam travelling in Wales and Anglesea is foretold, and in which, though the railroad bridge over the Menai is not exactly mentioned, it may be considered to be included; so that Wales and bardism have equal reason to be proud. This is the englyn alluded to:—

Codais, ymolchais yn Môn, cyn naw awr
Ciniewa'n Nghaer Lleon,
Pryd gosber yn y Werddon,
Prydnawn wrth dan mawn yn Môn.

The above englyn was printed in the Greal, 1792, p. 316; the language shows it to be a production of about the middle of the seventeenth century. The following is nearly a literal translation:—

I got up in Mona as soon as 'twas light,
At nine in old Chester my breakfast I took;
In Ireland I dined, and in Mona, ere night,
By the turf fire sat, in my own ingle nook.

Now, as sure as the couplet by Robert Lleiaf foretells that a bridge would eventually be built over the strait, by which people would pass, and traffic be carried on, so surely does the above englyn foreshadow the speed by which people would travel by steam, a speed by which distance is already all but annihilated. At present it is easy enough to get up at dawn at Holyhead, the point of Anglesey the most distant from Chester, and to breakfast at that old town by nine; and though the feat has never yet been accomplished, it would be quite possible, provided proper preparations were made, to start from Holyhead at daybreak, breakfast at Chester at nine, or before, dine in Ireland at two, and get back again to Holyhead ere the sun of the longest day has set. And as surely as the couplet about the bridge argues great foresight in the man that wrote it, so surely does the englyn prove that its author must have been possessed of the faculty of second sight, as nobody without it could, in the middle of the seventeenth century, when the powers of steam were unknown, have written anything in which

travelling by steam is so distinctly alluded to.

Truly some old bard of the seventeenth century must in a vision of the second sight have seen the railroad bridge across the Menai, the Chester train dashing across it, at high railroad speed, and a figure exactly like his own seated comfortably in a third-class carriage.

And now a few words on the second sight, a few calm, quiet words, in which there is not the slightest wish to display either eccentricity or book-learning.

The second sight is the power of seeing events before they happen, or of seeing events which are happening far beyond the reach of the common sight, or between which and the common sight barriers intervene, which it cannot pierce. The number of those who possess this gift or power is limited, and perhaps no person ever possessed it in a perfect degree: some more frequently see coming events, or what is happening at a distance, than others; some see things dimly, others with great distinctness. The events seen are sometimes of great importance, sometimes highly

nonsensical and trivial; sometimes they relate to the person who sees them, sometimes to other people. This is all that can be said with anything like certainty with respect to the nature of the second sight, a faculty for which there is no accounting, which, were it better developed, might be termed the sixth sense.

The second sight is confined to no particular country, and has at all times existed. Particular nations have obtained a celebrity for it for a time, which they have afterwards lost, the celebrity being transferred to other nations, who were previously not noted for the faculty. The Jews were at one time particularly celebrated for the possession of the second sight; they are no longer so. The power was at one time very common amongst the Icelanders and the inhabitants of the Hebrides, but it is so no longer. Many and extraordinary instances of the second sight have lately occurred in that part of England generally termed East Anglia, where in former times the power of the second sight seldom manifested itself.

There are various books in existence in which

the second sight is treated of or mentioned. Amongst others there is one called Martin's Visit to the Hebrides, published in the year 1700,' which is indeed the book from which most writers in English, who have treated of the second sight, have derived their information. The author gives various anecdotes of the second sight, which he had picked up during his visits to those remote islands, which until the publication of his tour were almost unknown to the world. It will not be amiss to observe here that the term second sight is of Lowland Scotch origin, and first made its appearance in print in Martin's book. The Gaelic term for the faculty is taibhsearachd, the literal meaning of which is what is connected with a spectral appearance, the root of the word being taibhse, a spectral appearance or vision.

Then there is the History of Duncan Campbell. The father of this person was a native of Shetland, who being shipwrecked on the coast of Swedish Lapland, and hospitably received by the natives, married a woman of the country, by whom he had Duncan, who was born deaf and

dumb. On the death of his mother the child was removed by his father to Scotland, where he was educated and taught the use of the finger alphabet, by means of which people are enabled to hold discourse with each other, without moving the lips or tongue. This alphabet was originally invented in Scotland, and at the present day is much in use there, not only amongst dumb people, but many others, who employ it as a silent means of communication. Nothing is more usual than to see passengers in a common conveyance in Scotland discoursing with their fingers. Duncan at an early period gave indications of possessing the second sight. After various adventures he came to London, where for many years he practised as a fortune-teller, pretending to answer all questions, whether relating to the past or the future, by means of the second sight. There can be no doubt that this man was to a certain extent an impostor; no person exists having a thorough knowledge either of the past or future by means of the second sight, which only visits particular people by fits and starts, and which is quite independent

of individual will; but it is equally certain that he disclosed things which no person could have been acquainted with without visitations of the second sight. His papers fell into the hands of Defoe, who wrought them up in his own peculiar manner, and gave them to the world under the title of the Life of Mr. Duncan Campbell, the deaf and dumb gentleman; with an appendix containing many anecdotes of the second sight from Martin's tour.

But by far the most remarkable book in existence, connected with the second sight, is one in the ancient Norse language entitled "Nial's Saga."* It was written in Iceland about the year 1200, and contains the history of a certain Nial and his family, and likewise notices of various other people. This Nial was what was called a spámadr, that is, a spaeman or a person

* One or two of the characters and incidents in this Saga are mentioned in the Romany Rye. London, 1857, vol. i. p. 240; vol. ii. p. 150.

A partial translation of the Saga, made by myself, has been many years in existence. It forms part of a mountain of unpublished translations from the Northern languages. In my younger days no London publisher, or indeed magazine editor, would look at anything from the Norse, Danish, &c.

capable of foretelling events. He was originally a heathen—when, however, Christianity was introduced into Iceland, he was amongst the first to embrace it, and persuaded his family and various people of his acquaintance to do the same, declaring that a new faith was necessary, the old religion of Odin, Thor and Frey being quite unsuited to the times. The book is no romance, but a domestic history compiled from tradition about two hundred years after the events which it narrates had taken place. Of its style, which is wonderfully terse, the following translated account of Nial and his family will perhaps convey some idea :—

"There was a man called Nial who was the son of Thorgeir Gelling, the son of Thorolf. The mother of Nial was called Asgerdr ; she was the daughter of Ar, the Silent, the Lord of a district in Norway. She had come over to Iceland and settled down on land to the west of Markarfliot, between Oldustein and Sela-landsmul. Holtathorir was her son, father of Thorleif Krak, from whom the Skogverjars are

come, and likewise of Thorgrim the big and Skorargeir. Nial dwelt at Bergthorshvâl in Landey, but had another house at Thorolfell. Nial was very rich in property and handsome to look at, but had no beard. He was so great a lawyer that it was impossible to find his equal, he was very wise, and had the gift of foretelling events, he was good at counsel, and of a good disposition, and whatever counsel he gave people was for their best; he was gentle and humane, and got every man out of trouble who came to him in his need. His wife was called Bergthora; she was the daughter of Skarphethin. She was a bold-spirited woman who feared nobody, and was rather rough of temper. They had six children, three daughters and three sons, all of whom will be frequently mentioned in this saga."

In the history many instances are given of Nial's skill in giving good advice and his power of seeing events before they happened. Nial lived in Iceland during most singular times, in which though there were laws provided for every possible case, no man could have redress

for any injury unless he took it himself, or his friends took it for him, simply because there were no ministers of justice supported by the State, authorized and empowered to carry the sentence of the law into effect. For example, if a man were slain his death would remain unpunished unless he had a son or a brother, or some other relation to slay the slayer, or to force him to pay "bod," that is, amends in money, to be determined by the position of the man who was slain. Provided the man who was slain had relations, his death was generally avenged, as it was considered the height of infamy in Iceland to permit one's relations to be murdered, without slaying their murderers, or obtaining bod from them. The right, however, permitted to relations of taking with their own hands the lives of those who had slain their friends, produced incalculable mischiefs; for if the original slayer had friends, they, in the event of his being slain in retaliation for what he had done, made it a point of honour to avenge his death, so that by the lex talionis feuds were perpetuated. Nial was a great

benefactor to his countrymen, by arranging matters between people at variance, in which he was much helped by his knowledge of the law, and by giving wholesome advice to people in precarious situations, in which he was frequently helped by the power which he possessed of the second sight. On several occasions, he settled the disputes, in which his friend Gunnar was involved, a noble, generous character, and the champion of Iceland, but who had a host of foes, envious of his renown; and it was not his fault if Gunnar was eventually slain, for if the advice which he gave had been followed the champion would have died an old man; and if his own sons had followed his advice, and not been over fond of taking vengeance on people who had wronged them, they would have escaped a horrible death in which he himself was involved, as he had always foreseen he should be.

"Dost thou know by what death thou thyself wilt die?" said Gunnar to Nial, after the latter had been warning him that if he followed

a certain course he would die by a violent death.

"I do," said Nial.

"What is it?" said Gunnar.

"What people would think the least probable," replied Nial.

He meant that he should die by fire. The kind generous Nial, who tried to get everybody out of difficulty, perished by fire. His sons by their violent conduct had incensed numerous people against them. The house in which they lived with their father was beset at night by an armed party, who, unable to break into it owing to the desperate resistance which they met with from the sons of Nial, Skarphethin, Helgi and Grimmr and a comrade of theirs called Kari,* set it in a blaze, in which perished Nial the lawyer and man of the second sight, his wife, Bergthora, and two of their sons, the third, Helgi, having been previously slain, and Kari,

* All these three names are very common in Norfolk, the population of which is of Norse origin. Skarphethin is at present pronounced Sharpin, Helgi Heely. Skarphethin, interpreted, is a keen pirate.

who was destined to be the avenger of the ill-fated family, having made his escape, after performing deeds of heróism, which for centuries after were the themes of song and tale in the ice-bound isle.

CHAPTER XXIX.

SNOWDON.—CAERNARVON.—MAXEN WLEDIG.—MOEL Y GYNGHORION.—THE WYDDFA.—SNOW OF SNOWDON.—RARE PLANT.

On the third morning after our arrival at Bangor we set out for Snowdon.

Snowdon or Eryri is no single hill, but a mountainous region, the loftiest part of which, called Y Wyddfa, nearly four thousand feet above the level of the sea, is generally considered to be the highest point of Southern Britain. The name Snowdon was bestowed upon this region by the early English on account of its snowy appearance in winter; Eryri by the Britons, because in the old time it abounded with eagles, Eryri* in the ancient

* Eryri likewise signifies an excrescence or scrofulous eruption. It is possible that many will be disposed to maintain that in the case of Snowdon the word is intended to express a rugged excrescence or eruption on the surface of the earth.

British language signifying an eyrie or breeding-place of eagles.

Snowdon is interesting on various accounts. It is interesting for its picturesque beauty. Perhaps in the whole world there is no region more picturesquely beautiful than Snowdon, a region of mountains, lakes, cataracts and groves, in which Nature shows herself in her most grand and beautiful forms.

It is interesting from its connection with history: it was to Snowdon that Vortigern retired from the fury of his own subjects, caused by the favour which he showed to the detested Saxons. It was there that he called to his counsels Merlin, said to be begotten on a hag by an incubus, but who was in reality the son of a Roman consul by a British woman. It was in Snowdon that he built the castle, which he fondly deemed would prove impregnable, but which his enemies destroyed by flinging wild fire over its walls; and it was in a wind-beaten valley of Snowdon, near the sea, that his dead body decked in green armour had a

mound of earth and stones raised over it. It was on the heights of Snowdon that the brave but unfortunate Llywelin ap Griffith made his last stand for Cambrian independence; and it was to Snowdon that that very remarkable man, Owen Glendower, retired with his irregular bands before Harry the Fourth and his numerous and disciplined armies, soon however to emerge from its defiles and follow the foe, retreating less from the Welsh arrows from the crags, than from the cold, rain and starvation of the Welsh hills.

But it is from its connection with romance that Snowdon derives its chief interest. Who when he thinks of Snowdon does not associate it with the heroes of romance, Arthur and his knights? whose fictitious adventures, the splendid dreams of Welsh and Breton minstrels, many of the scenes of which are the valleys and passes of Snowdon, are the origin of romance, before which what is classic has for more than half a century been waning, and is perhaps eventually destined to disappear. Yes, to ro-

mance Snowdon is indebted for its interest and consequently for its celebrity; but for romance Snowdon would assuredly not be what it at present is, one of the very celebrated hills of the world, and to the poets of modern Europe almost what Parnassus was to those of old.

To the Welsh, besides being the hill of the Awen or Muse, it has always been the hill of hills, the loftiest of all mountains, the one whose snow is the coldest, to climb to whose peak is the most difficult of all feats; and the one whose fall will be the most astounding catastrophe of the last day.

To view this mountain I and my little family set off in a calèche on the third morning after our arrival at Bangor.

Our first stage was to Caernarvon. As I subsequently made a journey to Caernarvon on foot, I shall say nothing about the road till I give an account of that expedition, save that it lies for the most part in the neighbourhood of the sea. We reached Caernarvon, which is distant ten miles from Bangor, about eleven

o'clock, and put up at an inn to refresh ourselves and the horses. It is a beautiful little town situated on the southern side of the Menai Strait at nearly its western extremity. It is called Caernarvon, because it is opposite Mona or Anglesey: Caernarvon signifying the town or castle opposite Mona. Its principal feature is its grand old castle, fronting the north, and partly surrounded by the sea. This castle was built by Edward the First after the fall of his brave adversary Llewelyn, and in it was born his son Edward whom, when an infant, he induced the Welsh chieftains to accept as their prince without seeing, by saying that the person whom he proposed to be their sovereign was one who was not only born in Wales, but could not speak a word of the English language. The town of Caernarvon, however, existed long before Edward's time, and was probably originally a Roman station. According to Welsh tradition it was built by Maxen Wledig or Maxentius, in honour of his wife Ellen who was born in the neigbourhood. Maxentius, who was

a Briton by birth, and partly by origin, contested unsuccessfully the purple with Gratian and Valentinian, and to support his claim led over to the Continent an immense army of Britons, who never returned, but on the fall of their leader settled down in that part of Gaul generally termed Armorica, which means a maritime region, but which the Welsh call Llydaw, or Lithuania, which was the name, or something like the name, which the region bore when Maxen's army took possession of it, owing, doubtless, to its having been the quarters of a legion composed of barbarians from the country of Leth or Lithuania.

After staying about an hour at Caernarvon we started for Llanberis, a few miles to the east. Llanberis is a small village situated in a valley, and takes its name from Peris, a British saint of the sixth century, son of Helig ab Glanog. The valley extends from west to east, having the great mountain of Snowdon on its south, and a range of immense hills on its northern, side. We entered this valley by a pass called Nant y Glo or the ravine of the coal, and passing a lake on our left, on which I observed a solitary cor-

racle, with a fisherman in it, were presently at the village. Here we got down at a small inn, and having engaged a young lad to serve as guide, I set out with Henrietta to ascend the hill, my wife remaining behind, not deeming herself sufficiently strong to encounter the fatigue of the expedition.

Pointing with my finger to the head of Snowdon towering a long way from us in the direction of the east, I said to Henrietta :—

"Dacw Eryri, yonder is Snowdon. Let us try to get to the top. The Welsh have a proverb: 'It is easy to say yonder is Snowdon; but not so easy to ascend it.' Therefore I would advise you to brace up your nerves and sinews for the attempt."

We then commenced the ascent, arm in arm, followed by the lad, I singing at the stretch of my voice a celebrated Welsh stanza, in which the proverb about Snowdon is given, embellished with a fine moral, and which may thus be rendered :—

"Easy to say 'Behold Eryri,'
But difficult to reach its head;
Easy for him whose hopes are cheery
To bid the wretch be comforted."

We were far from being the only visitors to the hill this day; groups of people, or single individuals, might be seen going up or descending the path as far as the eye could reach. The path was remarkably good, and for some way the ascent was anything but steep. On our left was the vale of Llanberis, and on our other side a broad hollow, or valley of Snowdon, beyond which were two huge hills forming part of the body of the grand mountain, the lowermost of which our guide told me was called Moel Elia, and the uppermost Moel y Cynghorion. On we went until we had passed both these hills, and come to the neighbourhood of a great wall of rocks constituting the upper region of Snowdon, and where the real difficulty of the ascent commences. Feeling now rather out of breath we sat down on a little knoll with our faces to the south, having a small lake near us, on our left hand, which lay dark and deep, just under the great wall.

Here we sat for some time resting and surveying the scene which presented itself to us,

the principal object of which was the north-eastern side of the mighty Moel y Cynghorion, across the wide hollow or valley, which it overhangs in the shape of a sheer precipice some five hundred feet in depth. Struck by the name of Moel y Cynghorion, which in English signifies the hill of the counsellors, I inquired of our guide why the hill was so called, but as he could afford me no information on the point I presumed that it was either called the hill of the counsellors from the Druids having held high consultation on its top, in time of old, or from the unfortunate Llewelyn having consulted there with his chieftains, whilst his army lay encamped in the vale below.

Getting up we set about surmounting what remained of the ascent. The path was now winding and much more steep than it had hitherto been. I was at one time apprehensive that my gentle companion would be obliged to give over the attempt; the gallant girl, however, persevered, and in little more than twenty minutes from the time when we arose from our resting-

place under the crags, we stood, safe and sound, though panting, upon the very top of Snowdon the far-famed Wyddfa.

The Wyddfa is about thirty feet in diameter and is surrounded on three sides by a low wall. In the middle of it is a rude cabin, in which refreshments are sold, and in which a person resides throughout the year, though there are few or no visitors to the hill's top, except during the months of summer. Below on all sides are frightful precipices except on the side of the west. Towards the east it looks perpendicularly into the dyffrin or vale, nearly a mile below, from which to the gazer it is at all times an object of admiration, of wonder and almost of fear.

There we stood on the Wyddfa, in a cold bracing atmosphere, though the day was almost stiflingly hot in the regions from which we had ascended. There we stood enjoying a scene inexpressibly grand, comprehending a considerable part of the main land of Wales, the whole of Anglesey, a faint glimpse of part of Cumberland; the Irish Channel, and what might be either a misty creation or the shadowy outline

of the hills of Ireland. Peaks and pinnacles and huge moels stood up here and there, about us and below us, partly in glorious light, partly in deep shade. Manifold were the objects which we saw from the brow of Snowdon, but of all the objects which we saw, those which filled us with most delight and admiration, were numerous lakes and lagoons, which, like sheets of ice or polished silver, lay reflecting the rays of the sun in the deep valleys at his feet.

"Here," said I to Henrietta, "you are on the top crag of Snowdon, which the Welsh consider, and perhaps with justice to be the most remarkable crag in the world; which is mentioned in many of their old wild romantic tales, and some of the noblest of their poems, amongst others in the 'Day of Judgment,' by the illustrious Goronwy Owen, where it is brought forward in the following manner:

Ail i'r ar ael Eryri,
Cyfartal hoewal a hi.

"'The brow of Snowdon shall be levelled with the ground, and the eddying waters shall murmur round it.'

"You are now on the top crag of Snowdon,

generally termed Y Wyddfa,* which means a conspicuous place or tumulus, and which is generally in winter covered with snow; about which snow there are in the Welsh language two curious englynion or stanzas consisting entirely of vowels with the exception of one consonant namely the letter R.

Oer yw'r Eira ar Eryri,—o'ryw
Ar awyr i rewi;
Oer yw 'r ia ar riw 'r ri,
A'r Eira oer yw 'Ryri.

O Ri y'Ryri yw'r oera,—o'r âr,
Ar oror wir arwa;
O'r awyr a yr Eira,
O'i ryw i roi rew a'r ia.

"'Cold is the snow on Snowdon's brow
It makes the air so chill;
For cold, I trow, there is no snow
Like that of Snowdon's hill.

"'A hill most chill is Snowdon's hill,
And wintry is his brow;
From Snowdon's hill the breezes chill
Can freeze the very snow.'"

Such was the harangue which I uttered on

* It will not be amiss to observe that the original term is gwyddfa; but gwyddfa being a feminine noun or compound commencing with g, which is a mutable consonant, loses the initial letter before y the definite article—you say Gwyddfa a tumulus, but not y gwyddfa *the* tumulus.

the top of Snowdon; to which Henrietta listened with attention; three or four English, who stood nigh, with grinning scorn, and a Welsh gentleman with considerable interest. The latter coming forward shook me by the hand exclaiming,

"Wyt ti Lydaueg?"

"I am not a Llydauan," said I; "I wish I was, or anything but what I am, one of a nation amongst whom any knowledge save what relates to money-making and over-reaching is looked upon as a disgrace. I am ashamed to say that I am an Englishman."

I then returned his shake of the hand; and bidding Henrietta and the guide follow me went into the cabin, where Henrietta had some excellent coffee and myself and the guide a bottle of tolerable ale; very much refreshed we set out on our return.

A little way from the top, on the right-hand side as you descend, there is a very steep path running down in a zig-zag manner to the pass which leads to Capel Curig. Up this path it is indeed a task of difficulty to ascend

to the Wyddfa, the one by which we mounted being comparatively easy. On Henrietta's pointing out to me a plant, which grew on a crag by the side of this path some way down, I was about to descend in order to procure it for her, when our guide springing forward darted down the path with the agility of a young goat, and in less than a minute returned with it in his hand and presented it gracefully to the dear girl, who on examining it said it belonged to a species of which she had long been desirous of possessing a specimen. Nothing material occurred in our descent to Llanberis, where my wife was anxiously awaiting us. The ascent and descent occupied four hours. About ten o'clock at night we again found ourselves at Bangor.

CHAPTER XXX.

GRONWY OWEN.—STRUGGLES OF GENIUS.—THE STIPEND.

THE day after our expedition to Snowdon I and my family parted; they returning by rail-road to Chester and Llangollen whilst I took a trip into Anglesey to visit the birth-place of the great poet Goronwy Owen, whose works I had read with enthusiasm in my early years.

Goronwy or Gronwy Owen, was born in the year 1722, at a place called Llanfair Mathafarn Eithaf in Anglesey. He was the eldest of three children. His parents were peasants and so exceedingly poor that they were unable to send him to school. Even, however, when an unlettered child he gave indications that he was visited by the awen or muse. At length the

celebrated Lewis Morris chancing to be at Llanfair became acquainted with the boy, and struck with his natural talents, determined that he should have all the benefit which education could bestow. He accordingly, at his own expense sent him to school at Beaumaris, where he displayed a remarkable aptitude for the acquisition of learning. He subsequently sent him to Jesus College Oxford, and supported him there whilst studying for the church. Whilst at Jesus, Gronwy distinguished himself as a Greek and Latin scholar, and gave such proofs of poetical talent in his native language, that he was looked upon by his countrymen of that Welsh college as the rising Bard of the age. After completing his collegiate course he returned to Wales, where he was ordained a minister of the Church in the year 1745. The next seven years of his life were a series of cruel disappointments and pecuniary embarrassments. The grand wish of his heart was to obtain a curacy and to settle down in Wales. Certainly a very reasonable wish. To say nothing of his being a great genius, he was eloquent, highly learned,

modest, meek and of irreproachable morals, yet Gronwy Owen could obtain no Welsh curacy, nor could his friend Lewis Morris, though he exerted himself to the utmost, procure one for him. It is true that he was told that he might go to Llanfair, his native place, and officiate there at a time when the curacy happened to be vacant, and thither he went, glad at heart to get back amongst his old friends, who enthusiastically welcomed him; yet scarcely had he been there three weeks when he received notice from the Chaplain of the Bishop of Bangor that he must vacate Llanfair in order to make room for a Mr. John Ellis, a young clergyman of large independent fortune, who was wishing for a curacy under the Bishop of Bangor, Doctor Hutton—so poor Gronwy the eloquent, the learned, the meek was obliged to vacate the pulpit of his native place to make room for the rich young clergyman, who wished to be within dining distance of the palace of Bangor. Truly in this world the full shall be crammed, and those who have little, shall have the little which they have taken away from them. Unable to

obtain employment in Wales Gronwy sought for it in England, and after some time procured the curacy of Oswestry in Shropshire, where he married a respectable young woman, who eventually brought him two sons and a daughter.

From Oswestry he went to Donnington near Shrewsbury, where under a certain Scotchman named Douglas, who was an absentee, and who died Bishop of Salisbury, he officiated as curate and master of a grammar school for a stipend —always grudgingly and contumeliously paid— of three-and-twenty pounds a year. From Donnington he removed to Walton in Cheshire, where he lost his daughter who was carried off by a fever. His next removal was to Northolt, a pleasant village in the neighbourhood of London.

He held none of his curacies long, either losing them from the caprice of his principals, or being compelled to resign them from the parsimony which they practised towards him. In the year 1756 he was living in a garret in London vainly soliciting employment in his sacred calling, and undergoing with his family

the greatest privations. At length his friend Lewis Morris, who had always assisted him to the utmost of his ability, procured him the mastership of a government school at New Brunswick in North America with a salary of three hundred pounds a year. Thither he went with his wife and family, and there he died sometime about the year 1780.

He was the last of the great poets of Cambria and with the exception of Ab Gwilym the greatest which she has produced. His poems which for a long time had circulated through Wales in manuscript were first printed in the year 1819. They are composed in the ancient Bardic measures, and were with one exception, namely an elegy on the death of his benefactor Lewis Morris, which was transmitted from the New World, written before he had attained the age of thirty-five. All his pieces are excellent, but his masterwork is decidedly the Cywydd y Farn or "Day of Judgment." This poem which is generally considered by the Welsh as the brightest ornament of their ancient language, was composed at Donnington a small hamlet in

Shropshire on the north-west spur of the Wrekin, at which place, as has been already said, Gronwy toiled as schoolmaster and curate under Douglas the Scot, for a stipend of three-and-twenty pounds a year.

CHAPTER XXXI.

START FOR ANGLESEY.—THE POST MASTER.—ASKING QUESTIONS.—MYNYDD LYDIART.—MR. PRITCHARD.—WAY TO LLANFAIR.

WHEN I started from Bangor, to visit the birth-place of Gronwy Owen, I by no means saw my way clearly before me. I knew that he was born in Anglesey in a parish called Llanfair Mathafarn eithaf, that is Saint Mary's of farther Mathafarn—but as to where this Mathafarn lay, north or south, near or far, I knew positively nothing. Passing through the northern suburb of Bangor I saw a small house in front of which was written "post-office" in white letters; before this house underneath a shrub in a little garden sat an old man reading. Thinking that from this person, whom I judged to be the post-master, I was as likely to obtain information

with respect to the place of my destination as from any one, I stopped and taking off my hat for a moment, inquired whether he could tell me anything about the direction of a place called Llanfair Mathafarn eithaf. He did not seem to understand my question, for getting up he came toward me and asked what I wanted: I repeated what I had said, whereupon his face became animated.

"Llanfair Mathafarn eithaf!" said he. "Yes, I can tell you about it, and with good reason for it lies not far from the place where I was born."

The above was the substance of what he said, and nothing more, for he spoke in English somewhat broken.

"And how far is Llanfair from here?" said I.

"About ten miles," he replied.

"That's nothing," said I; "I was afraid it was much farther."

"Do you call ten miles nothing," said he, "in a burning day like this? I think you will be both tired and thirsty before you get to Llanfair, supposing you go there on foot. But what may

your business be at Llanfair?" said he looking at me inquisitively. "It is a strange place to go to, unless you go to buy hogs or cattle."

"I go to buy neither hogs nor cattle," said I, "though I am somewhat of a judge of both; I go on a more important errand, namely to see the birth-place of the great Gronwy Owen."

"Are you any relation of Gronwy Owen?" said the old man, looking at me more inquisitively than before, through a large pair of spectacles, which he wore.

"None whatever," said I.

"Then why do you go to see his parish, it is a very poor one."

"From respect to his genius," said I; "I read his works long ago, and was delighted with them."

"Are you a Welshman?" said the old man.

"No," said I, "I am no Welshman."

"Can you speak Welsh?" said he, addressing me in that language.

"A little," said I; "but not so well as I can read it."

"Well," said the old man, "I have lived here

a great many years, but never before did a Saxon call upon me; asking questions about Gronwy Owen, or his birth-place. Immortality to his memory! I owe much to him, for reading his writings taught me to be a poet!"

"Dear me!" said I, "are you a poet?"

"I trust I am," said he; "though the humblest of Ynys Fon."

A flash of proud fire, methought, illumined his features as he pronounced these last words.

"I am most happy to have met you," said I; "but tell me how am I to get to Llanfair?"

"You must go first," said he, "to Traeth Coch which in Saxon is called the 'Red sand.' In the village called the Pentraeth which lies above that sand, I was born; through the village and over the bridge you must pass, and after walking four miles due north you will find yourself in Llanfair eithaf, at the northern extremity of Mon. Farewell! That ever Saxon should ask me about Gronwy Owen, and his birth-place! I scarcely believe you to be a Saxon, but whether you be or not, I repeat farewell."

Coming to the Menai Bridge I asked the man who took the penny toll at the entrance, the way to Pentraeth Coch.

"You see that white house by the wood," said he, pointing some distance into Anglesey; "you must make towards it till you come to a place where there are four cross roads and then you must take the road to the right."

Passing over the bridge I made my way towards the house by the wood which stood on the hill till I came where the four roads met, when I turned to the right as directed.

The country through which I passed seemed tolerably well cultivated, the hedge-rows were very high, seeming to spring out of low stone walls. I met two or three gangs of reapers proceeding to their work with scythes in their hands.

In about half-an-hour I passed by a farm-house partly surrounded with walnut trees. Still the same high hedges on both sides of the road: are these hedges relics of the sacrificial groves of Mona? thought I to myself. Then I came to a wretched village through which I hurried at

the rate of six miles an hour. I then saw a long lofty craggy hill on my right hand towards the east.

"What mountain is that?" said I to an urchin playing in the hot dust of the road.

"Mynydd Lydiart!" said the urchin, tossing up a handful of the hot dust into the air, part of which in descending fell into my eyes.

I shortly afterwards passed by a handsome lodge. I then saw groves, mountain Lydiart forming a noble background.

"Who owns this wood?" said I in Welsh to two men who were limbing a felled tree by the road-side.

"Lord Vivian" answered one, touching his hat.

"The gentleman is our countryman" said he to the other after I had passed.

I was now descending the side of a pretty valley, and soon found myself at Pentraeth Coch. The part of the Pentraeth where I now was consisted of a few houses and a church, or something which I judged to be a church, for there was no steeple; the houses and church stood about

a little open spot or square, the church on the east, and on the west a neat little inn or public-house over the door of which was written "The White Horse. Hugh Pritchard." By this time I had verified in part the prediction of the old Welsh poet of the post-office. Though I was not yet arrived at Llanfair, I was, if not tired, very thirsty, owing to the burning heat of the weather, so I determined to go in and have some ale. On entering the house I was greeted in English by Mr. Hugh Pritchard himself, a tall bulky man with a weather-beaten countenance, dressed in a brown jerkin and corduroy trowsers, with a broad low-crowned buff-coloured hat on his head, and what might be called half shoes and half high-lows on his feet. He had a short pipe in his mouth which when he greeted me he took out, but replaced as soon as the greeting was over, which consisted of "Good day, sir," delivered in a frank hearty tone. I looked Mr. Hugh Pritchard in the face and thought I had never seen a more honest countenance. On my telling Mr. Pritchard that I wanted a pint of ale a buxom damsel came for-

ward and led me into a nice cool parlour on the right-hand side of the door and then went to fetch the ale.

Mr. Pritchard meanwhile went into a kind of tap-room, fronting the parlour, where I heard him talking in Welsh about pigs and cattle to some of his customers. I observed that he spoke with some hesitation; which circumstance I mention as rather curious, he being the only Welshman I have ever known who, when speaking his native language, appeared to be at a loss for words. The damsel presently brought me the ale, which I tasted and found excellent; she was going away when I asked her whether Mr. Pritchard was her father; on her replying in the affirmative I inquired whether she was born in that house.

"No!" said she; "I was born in Liverpool; my father was born in this house, which belonged to his fathers before him, but he left it at an early age and married my mother in Liverpool, who was an Anglesey woman, and so I was born in Liverpool."

"And what did you do in Liverpool?" said I.

"My mother kept a little shop," said the girl, "whilst my father followed various occupations."

"And how long have you been here?" said I.

"Since the death of my grandfather," said the girl, "which happened about a year ago. When he died my father came here and took possession of his birth-right."

"You speak very good English," said I; "have you any Welsh?"

"O yes, plenty," said the girl; "we always speak Welsh together, but being born at Liverpool, I of course have plenty of English."

"And which language do you prefer?" said I.

"I think I like English best," said the girl, "it is the most useful language."

"Not in Anglesey," said I.

"Well," said the girl, "it is the most genteel."

"Gentility," said I, "will be the ruin of

Welsh, as it has been of many other things—what have I to pay for the ale?"

"Three pence" said she.

I paid the money and the girl went out. I finished my ale, and getting up made for the door; at the door I was met by Mr. Hugh Pritchard, who came out of the tap-room to thank me for my custom, and to bid me farewell. I asked him whether I should have any difficulty in finding the way to Llanfair.

"None whatever," said he, "you have only to pass over the bridge of the traeth, and to go due north for about four miles, and you will find yourself in Llanfair."

"What kind of place is it?" said I.

"A poor straggling village," said Mr. Pritchard.

"Shall I be able to obtain a lodging there for the night?" said I.

"Scarcely one such as you would like," said Hugh.

"And where had I best pass the night?" I demanded.

"We can accommodate you comfortably here,"

said Mr. Pritchard, "provided you have no objection to come back."

I told him that I should be only too happy, and forthwith departed, glad at heart that I had secured a comfortable lodging for the night.

CHAPTER XXXII.

LEAVE PENTRAETH.—TRANQUIL SCENE.—THE KNOLL.—THE MILLER AND HIS WIFE.—POETRY OF GRONWY.—KIND OFFER.—CHURCH OF LLANFAIR.—NO ENGLISH.—CONFUSION OF IDEAS.—TŶ GRONWY.—NOTABLE LITTLE GIRL.—THE SYCAMORE LEAF.—HOME FROM CALIFORNIA.

THE village of Pentraeth Coch occupies two sides of a romantic dell—that part of it which stands on the southern side, and which comprises the church and the little inn, is by far the prettiest, that which occupies the northern, is a poor assemblage of huts, a brook rolls at the bottom of the dell over which there is a little bridge: coming to the bridge I stopped, and looked over the side into the water running briskly below, an aged man who looked like a beggar, but who did not beg of me, stood by.

"To what place does this water run?" said I in English.

"I know no Saxon," said he in trembling accents.

I repeated my question in Welsh.

"To the sea," he said, "which is not far off, indeed it is so near, that when there are high tides the salt water comes up to this bridge."

"You seem feeble?" said I.

"I am so," said he, "for I am old."

"How old are you?" said I.

"Sixteen after sixty," said the old man with a sigh; "and I have nearly lost my sight and my hearing."

"Are you poor?" said I.

"Very," said the old man.

I gave him a trifle which he accepted with thanks.

"Why is this sand called the red sand?" said I.

"I cannot tell you," said the old man, "I wish I could for you have been kind to me."

Bidding him farewell I passed through the northern part of the village to the top of the hill. I walked a little way forward and then stopped, as I had done at the bridge in the dale, and looked to the east, over a low stone wall.

Before me lay the sea or rather the northern entrance of the Menai Straits. To my right was mountain Lidiart projecting some way into the sea, to my left, that is to the north, was a high hill, with a few white houses near its base, forming a small village, which a woman who passed by knitting told me was called Llan Peder Goch or the Church of Red Saint Peter. Mountain Lidiart and the Northern Hill formed the headlands of a beautiful bay into which the waters of the traeth dell, from which I had come, were discharged. A sandbank, probably covered with the sea at high tide, seemed to stretch from mountain Lidiart a considerable way towards the northern hill. Mountain, bay and sandbank were bathed in sunshine; the water was perfectly calm; nothing was moving upon it, nor upon the shore, and I thought I had never beheld a more beautiful and tranquil scene.

I went on. The country which had hitherto been very beautiful, abounding with yellow cornfields, became sterile and rocky; there were stone walls, but no hedges. I passed by a moor

on my left, then a moory hillock on my right; the way was broken and stony; all traces of the good roads of Wales had disappeared; the habitations which I saw by the way were miserable hovels into and out of which large sows were stalking, attended by their farrows.

"Am I far from Llanfair?" said I to a child.

"You are in Llanfair, gentleman," said the child.

A desolate place was Llanfair. The sea in the neighbourhood to the south, limekilns with their stifling smoke not far from me. I sat down on a little green knoll on the right-hand side of the road; a small house was near me, and a desolate-looking mill at about a furlong's distance, to the south. Hogs came about me grunting and sniffing. I felt quite melancholy.

"Is this the neighbourhood of the birth-place of Gronwy Owen?" said I to myself. "No wonder that he was unfortunate through life, springing from such a region of wretchedness."

Wretched as the region seemed, however, I

soon found there were kindly hearts close by me.

As I sat on the knoll I heard some one slightly cough very near me, and looking to the left saw a man dressed like a miller looking at me from the garden of the little house, which I have already mentioned.

I got up and gave him the sele of the day in English. He was a man about thirty, rather tall than otherwise, with a very prepossessing countenance. He shook his head at my English.

"What," said I, addressing him in the language of the country, "have you no English? Perhaps you have Welsh?"

"Plenty," said he laughing, "there is no lack of Welsh amongst any of us here. Are you a Welshman?"

"No," said I, "an Englishman from the far east of Lloegr."

"And what brings you here?" said the man.

"A strange errand," I replied, "to look

at the birth-place of a man who has long been dead."

"Do you come to seek for an inheritance?" said the man.

"No," said I. "Besides the man whose birth-place I came to see died poor, leaving nothing behind him but immortality."

"Who was he?" said the miller.

"Did you ever hear a sound of Gronwy Owen?" said I.

"Frequently," said the miller; "I have frequently heard a sound of him. He was born close by in a house yonder," pointing to the south.

"O yes, gentleman," said a nice-looking woman, who holding a little child by the hand was come to the house-door, and was eagerly listening, "we have frequently heard speak of Gronwy Owen; there is much talk of him in these parts."

"I am glad to hear it," said I, "for I half feared that his name would not be known here."

"Pray, gentleman, walk in!" said the miller; "we are going to have our afternoon's meal, and shall be rejoiced if you will join us."

"Yes do, gentleman," said the miller's wife, for such the good woman was; "and many a welcome shall you have."

I hesitated, and was about to excuse myself.

"Don't refuse, gentleman!" said both, "surely you are not too proud to sit down with us?"

"I am afraid I shall only cause you trouble," said I.

"Dim blinder, no trouble," exclaimed both at once; "pray do walk in!"

I entered the house, and the kitchen, parlour, or whatever it was, a nice little room with a slate floor. They made me sit down at a table by the window, which was already laid for a meal. There was a clean cloth upon it, a tea-pot, cups and saucers, a large plate of bread-and-butter, and a plate, on which were a few very thin slices of brown, watery cheese.

My good friends took their seats, the wife poured out tea for the stranger, and her hus-

band, helped us both to bread-and-butter and the watery cheese, then took care of herself. Before, however, I could taste the tea, the wife, seeming to recollect herself, started up, and hurrying to a cupboard, produced a basin full of snow-white lump sugar, and taking the spoon out of my hand, placed two of the largest lumps in my cup, though she helped neither her husband nor herself; the sugar-basin being probably only kept for grand occasions.

My eyes filled with tears; for in the whole course of my life I had never experienced so much genuine hospitality. Honour to the miller of Mona and his wife; and honour to the kind hospitable Celts in general! How different is the reception of this despised race of the wandering stranger from that of ———. However, I am a Saxon myself, and the Saxons have no doubt their virtues; a pity that they should be all uncouth and ungracious ones!

I asked my kind host his name.

"John Jones," he replied, "Melinydd of Llanfair."

"Is the mill which you work your own property?" I inquired.

"No," he answered; "I rent it of a person who lives close by."

"And how happens it," said I, "that you speak no English?"

"How should it happen," said he, "that I should speak any? I have never been far from here; my wife who has lived at service at Liverpool can speak some."

"Can you read poetry?" said I.

"I can read the psalms and hymns, that they sing at our chapel," he replied.

"Then you are not of the Church?" said I.

"I am not," said the miller; "I am a Methodist."

"Can you read the poetry of Gronwy Owen?" said I.

"I cannot," said the miller, "that is with any comfort; his poetry is in the ancient Welsh measures, which make poetry so difficult, that few can understand it."

"I can understand poetry in those measures," said I.

"And how much time did you spend," said the miller, "before you could understand the poetry of the measures?"

"Three years," said I.

The miller laughed.

"I could not have afforded all that time," said he, "to study the songs of Gronwy. However, it is well that some people should have time to study them. He was a great poet as I have been told, and is the glory of our land—but he was unfortunate; I have read his life in Welsh and part of his letters; and in doing so have shed tears."

"Has his house any particular name?" said I.

"It is called sometimes Tŷ Gronwy," said the miller; "but more frequently Tafarn Goch."

"The Red Tavern?" said I. "How is it that so many of your places are called Goch? there is Pentraeth Goch; there is Saint Pedair Goch, and here at Llanfair is Tafarn Goch."

The miller laughed.

"It will take a wiser man than I," said he, "to answer that question."

The repast over I rose up, gave my hosts thanks, and said "I will now leave you, and hunt up things connected with Gronwy."

"And where will you find a lletty for night, gentleman?" said the miller's wife. "This is a poor place, but if you will make use of our home you are welcome."

"I need not trouble you," said I, "I return this night to Pentraeth Goch where I shall sleep."

"Well," said the miller, "whilst you are at Llanfair I will accompany you about. Where shall we go to first?"

"Where is the church?" said I. "I should like to see the church where Gronwy worshipped God as a boy."

"The church is at some distance," said the man; "it is past my mill, and as I want to go to the mill for a moment, it will be perhaps well to go and see the church, before we go to the house of Gronwy."

I shook the miller's wife by the hand, patted a little yellow-haired girl of about two years old

on the head who during the whole time of the meal had sat on the slate floor looking up into my face, and left the house with honest Jones.

We directed our course to the mill, which lay some way down a declivity, towards the sea. Near the mill was a comfortable-looking house, which my friend told me belonged to the proprietor of the mill. A rustic-looking man stood in the mill-yard, who he said was the proprietor —the honest miller went into the mill, and the rustic-looking proprietor greeted me in Welsh, and asked me if I was come to buy hogs.

"No," said I; "I am come to see the birthplace of Gronwy Owen;" he stared at me for a moment, then seemed to muse, and at last walked away saying "Ah! a great man."

The miller presently joined me, and we proceeded farther down the hill. Our way lay between stone walls, and sometimes over them. The land was moory and rocky, with nothing grand about it, and the miller described it well when he said it was tîr gwael—mean land. In about a quarter of an hour we came to the

churchyard into which we got, the gate being locked, by clambering over the wall.

The church stands low down the descent, not far distant from the sea. A little brook, called in the language of the country a frwd, washes its yard-wall on the south. It is a small edifice with no spire, but to the south-west there is a little stone erection rising from the roof, in which hangs a bell—there is a small porch looking to the south. With respect to its interior I can say nothing, the door being locked. It is probably like the outside, simple enough. It seemed to be about two hundred and fifty years old, and to be kept in tolerable repair. Simple as the edifice was, I looked with great emotion upon it; and could I do else, when I reflected that the greatest British poet of the last century had worshipped God within it, with his poor father and mother, when a boy?

I asked the miller whether he could point out to me any tombs or grave-stones of Gronwy's family, but he told me that he was not aware of any. On looking about I found the name of Owen in the inscription on the

slate slab of a respectable-looking modern tomb, on the north-east side of the church. The inscription was as follows:

Er cof am Jane Owen,
Gwraig Edward Owen,
Monachlog Llanfair Mathafarn eithaf,
A fu farw Chwefror 28 1842
Yn 51 Oed.

i. e. "To the memory of Jane Owen wife of Edward Owen, of the monastery of St. Mary of farther Mathafarn, who died February 28, 1842, aged fifty one."

Whether the Edward Owen mentioned here was any relation to the great Gronwy, I had no opportunity of learning. I asked the miller what was meant by the monastery, and he told me that it was the name of a building to the north-east near the sea, which had once been a monastery, but had been converted into a farm-house, though it still retained its original name. "May all monasteries be converted into farm-houses," said I, "and may they still retain their original names in mockery of popery!"

Having seen all I could well see of the church and its precincts I departed with my kind guide. After we had retraced our steps

some way, we came to some stepping stones on the side of a wall, and the miller pointing to them said:

"The nearest way to the house of Gronwy will be over the llamfa."

I was now become ashamed of keeping the worthy fellow from his business and begged him to return to his mill. He refused to leave me, at first, but on my pressing him to do so, and on my telling him that I could find the way to the house of Gronwy very well by myself, he consented. We shook hands, the miller wished me luck, and betook himself to his mill, whilst I crossed the llamfa. I soon, however, repented having left the path by which I had come. I was presently in a maze of little fields with stone walls over which I had to clamber. At last I got into a lane with a stone wall on each side. A man came towards me and was about to pass me—his look was averted, and he was evidently one of those who have "no English." A Welshman of his description always averting his look when he sees a stranger who he thinks has "no Welsh," lest the stranger should ask him a

question and he be obliged to confess that he has "no English."

"Is this the way to Llanfair?" said I to the man. The man made a kind of rush in order to get past me.

"Have you any Welsh?" I shouted as loud as I could bawl.

The man stopped, and turning a dark sullen countenance half upon me said, "Yes, I have Welsh."

"Which is the way to Llanfair?" said I.

"Llanfair, Llanfair?" said the man, "what do you mean?"

"I want to get there," said I.

"Are you not there already?" said the fellow stamping on the ground, "are you not in Llanfair?"

"Yes, but I want to get to the town."

"Town, town! Oh, I have no English," said the man; and off he started like a frighted bullock. The poor fellow was probably at first terrified at seeing an Englishman, then confused at hearing an Englishman speak Welsh, a language which the Welsh in general imagine no

Englishman can speak, the tongue of an Englishman as they say not being long enough to pronounce Welsh; and lastly utterly deprived of what reasoning faculties he had still remaining by my asking him for the town of Llanfair, there being properly no town.

I went on and at last getting out of the lane, found myself upon the road, along which I had come about two hours before; the house of the miller was at some distance on my right. Near me were two or three houses and part of the skeleton of one, on which some men, in the dress of masons seemed to be occupied. Going up to these men I said in Welsh to one, whom I judged to be the principal, and who was rather a tall fine-looking fellow:

"Have you heard a sound of Gronwy Owain?"

Here occurred another instance of the strange things people do when their ideas are confused. The man stood for a moment or two, as if transfixed, a trowel motionless in one of his hands, and a brick in the other; at last giving a kind of gasp, he answered in very tolerable Spanish:

"Si, señor! he oido."

"Is his house far from here?" said I in Welsh.

"No, señor!" said the man, "no esta muy lejos."

"I am a stranger here, friend, can anybody show me the way?"

"Si Señor! este mozo luego acompañara usted."

Then turning to a lad of about eighteen, also dressed as a mason, he said in Welsh:

"Show this gentleman instantly the way to Tafarn Goch."

The lad flinging a hod down, which he had on his shoulder, instantly set off, making me a motion with his head to follow him. I did so, wondering what the man could mean by speaking to me in Spanish. The lad walked by my side in silence for about two furlongs till we came to a range of trees, seemingly sycamores, behind which was a little garden, in which stood a long low house with three chimneys. The lad stopping flung open a gate which led into the garden, then crying to a child which he saw within: "Gad roi tro"—let the man take a turn; he

was about to leave me, when I stopped him to put sixpence into his hand. He received the money with a gruff "Diolch!" and instantly set off at a quick pace. Passing the child who stared at me, I walked to the back part of the house, which seemed to be a long mud cottage. After examining the back part I went in front, where I saw an aged woman with several children, one of whom was the child I had first seen, she smiled and asked me what I wanted.

I said that I had come to see the house of Gronwy. She did not understand me, for shaking her head she said that she had no English, and was rather deaf. Raising my voice to a very high tone I said:

"Tŷ Gronwy!"

A gleam of intelligence flashed now in her eyes.

"Tŷ Gronwy," she said, "ah! I understand. Come in sir."

There were three doors to the house; she led me in by the midmost into a common cottage room, with no other ceiling, seemingly, than the roof. She bade me sit down by the window by

a little table, and asked me whether I would have a cup of milk and some bread-and-butter; I declined both, but said I should be thankful for a little water.

This she presently brought me in a teacup, I drank it, the children amounting to five standing a little way from me staring at me. I asked her if this was the house in which Gronwy was born. She said it was, but that it had been altered very much since his time—that three families had lived in it, but that she believed he was born about where we were now.

A man now coming in who lived at the next door, she said, I had better speak to him and tell him what I wanted to know, which he could then communicate to her, as she could understand his way of speaking much better than mine. Through the man I asked her whether there was any one of the blood of Gronwy Owen living in the house. She pointed to the children and said they had all some of his blood. I asked in what relationship they stood to Gronwy. She said she could hardly tell, that

tri priodas three marriages stood between, and that the relationship was on the mother's side. I gathered from her that the children had lost their mother, that their name was Jones, and that their father was her son. I asked if the house in which they lived was their own, she said no that it belonged to a man who lived at some distance. I asked if the children were poor.

"Very," said she.

I gave them each a trifle, and the poor old lady thanked me with tears in her eyes.

I asked whether the children could read, she said they all could, with the exception of the two youngest. The eldest she said could read anything, whether Welsh or English; she then took from the window-sill a book, which she put into my hand, saying the child could read it and understand it. I opened the book; it was an English school book treating on all the sciences.

"Can you write?" said I to the child, a little stubby girl of about eight, with a broad flat red face and grey eyes, dressed in a

chintz gown, a little bonnet on her head, and looking the image of notableness.

The little maiden, who had never taken her eyes off of me for a moment during the whole time I had been in the room, at first made no answer; being, however, bid by her grandmother to speak, she at length answered in a soft voice, "Medraf, I can."

"Then write your name in this book," said I, taking out a pocket-book and a pencil, "and write likewise that you are related to Gronwy Owen—and be sure you write in Welsh."

The little maiden very demurely took the book and pencil, and placing the former on the table wrote as follows:

"Ellen Jones yn perthyn o bell i gronow owen."

That is "Ellen Jones belonging from afar to Gronwy Owen."

When I saw the name of Ellen I had no doubt that the children were related to the illustrious Gronwy. Ellen is a very uncommon Welsh name, but it seems to have been a family name of the Owens; it was borne by an infant

daughter of the poet whom he tenderly loved, and who died whilst he was toiling at Walton in Cheshire,—

> "Ellen, my darling,
> Who liest in the churchyard of Walton."

says poor Gronwy in one of the most affecting elegies ever written.

After a little farther conversation I bade the family farewell and left the house. After going down the road a hundred yards I turned back in order to ask permission to gather a leaf from one of the sycamores. Seeing the man who had helped me in my conversation with the old woman standing at the gate, I told him what I wanted, whereupon he instantly tore down a handful of leaves and gave them to me—thrusting them into my coat-pocket I thanked him kindly and departed.

Coming to the half-erected house, I again saw the man to whom I had addressed myself for information. I stopped, and speaking Spanish to him, asked how he had acquired the Spanish language.

"I have been in Chili," sir, said he in the

same tongue, "and in California, and in those places I learned Spanish."

"What did you go to Chili for?" said I; "I need not ask you on what account you went to California."

"I went there as a mariner," said the man; "I sailed out of Liverpool for Chili."

"And how is it," said I, "that being a mariner and sailing in a Liverpool ship you do not speak English?"

"I speak English, señor," said the man, "perfectly well."

"Then how in the name of wonder," said I, speaking English, "came you to answer me in Spanish? I am an Englishman thorough bred."

"I can scarcely tell you how it was, sir," said the man scratching his head, "but I thought I would speak to you in Spanish."

"And why not English?" said I.

"Why, I heard you speaking Welsh," said the man, "and as for an Englishman speaking Welsh——"

"But why not answer me in Welsh?" said I.

"Why, I saw it was not your language, sir;"

said the man, "and as I had picked up some Spanish I thought it would be but fair to answer you in it."

"But how did you know that I could speak Spanish?" said I.

"I don't know indeed, sir," said the man; "but I looked at you, and something seemed to tell me that you could speak Spanish. I can't tell you how it was, sir," said he, looking me very innocently in the face, "but I was forced to speak Spanish to you. I was indeed!"

"The long and the short of it was," said I, "that you took me for a foreigner, and thought that it would be but polite to answer me in a foreign language."

"I dare say it was so, sir," said the man. "I dare say it was just as you say."

"How did you fare in California?" said I.

"Very fairly indeed, sir," said the man. "I made some money there, and brought it home, and with part of it I am building this house."

"I am very happy to hear it," said I, "you are really a remarkable man—few return from

California speaking Spanish as you do, and still fewer with money in their pockets."

The poor fellow looked pleased at what I said, more especially at that part of the sentence which touched upon his speaking Spanish well. Wishing him many years of health and happiness in the house he was building, I left him, and proceeded on my path towards Pentraeth Coch.

After walking some way, I turned round in order to take a last look of a place which had so much interest for me. The mill may be seen from a considerable distance; so may some of the scattered houses, and also the wood which surrounds the house of the illustrious Gronwy. Prosperity to Llanfair! and may many a pilgrimage be made to it of the same character as my own!

END OF VOL. I.

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